

Motions and Amendments

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00 am Tuesday, 27th February, 2024

Dean of Guild Court Room - City Chambers

Motions and Amendments

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Addendum by the Green Group

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee 27 February 2024 Item 7.1 – Capital City Partnership SLA Progress Update

Adds to 1.1.1:

“subject to a revision of KPI 2e to specify that the number of clients supported into Real Living Wage jobs should be 100%, not 80%.”

Moved by: Councillor Ben Parker
Seconded by:

Addendum by the Green Group

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee 27 February 2024 Item 7.5 – Increasing Affordable Homes Delivery

Adds:

1.2 Recognises that, given these challenges - and in addition to a need for increased grant funding from the Scottish Government - a new approach to financing social housing might be required.

1.3 Notes that, following a request from Committee in October 2023, a briefing note was circulated to Councillors explaining options for supplementing the HRA with funds from the General Fund, and notes that 3 of the 6 budgets submitted to the Full Council meeting on 22nd February 2024 included proposals to do this in order to bring void properties back into use.

1.4 Notes that the ability to transfer funds into the HRA from the General Fund requires approval from the Scottish Government, and that in late 2023 / early 2024, the Scottish Government had indicated that, for this consent to be given, a number of questions would need to be answered by the Council, including about the purpose of the transfer, public consultation plans for the proposal, resources involved (in both the General Fund and HRA), and details about what alternative funding options had already been considered.

1.5 Therefore, requests that officers further engage with Scottish Government officials to explore the questions raised in 1.4 and identify the parameters around when approval for the transfer of funds would and would not be given (with particular focus on what purposes would be permissible for this, e.g. to bring voids back into use, to retrofit homes, etc), reporting back to committee in 2 cycles to allow political groups adequate time to build this into their budget plans for 2025-2026.

Moved by: Councillor Ben Parker

Seconded by:

Addendum by the Green Group

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee 27 February 2024 Item 7.6 – Cyclical assurance on service performance

Adds to 1.1.2

“with the addition of reporting of an additional dataset (4.2.11) focused on delivery, management and maintenance of accessible homes and support for disabled people within the Housing and Homelessness service.”

Moved by: **Councillor Ben Parker**
Seconded by:

Addendum by the Liberal Democrat Group

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee 27 February 2024 Item 7.7 – Responding to the Housing Emergency Declaration

Committee adds;

1.1.5 Notes from the Internal Audit Ad Hoc Repairs, points -

2.4.9 To agree that this report will set out the reasons why there has been a failure of contract management and what specific actions are being taken in those service areas to bring contract management back in line.

2.4.14 To note a significant lack of processes and procedures to manage internal and contractor performance, check the quality of repairs, manage stock, approve invoices above the tolerance threshold or check completion of works; and that the lack of process puts the HRA at considerable risk and,

2.4.15 To agree that the Repairs Right First Time audit, alongside the previous audit on Mixed Tenure Repairs and the audit on Damp and Mould are referred to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work committee with a recommendation that monitoring of the audit management actions are included in the Housing Service Improvement Plan to monitor and secure best value for the HRA and improve services for tenants.

1.1.6 Requests that these interventions are incorporated into the Housing Emergency Plan and Strategy, and that future references from this audit are cross-referenced to avoid duplication, but highlight action.

Moved by: Cllr Pauline Flannery

Seconded by: Cllr Jack Caldwell

Addendum by the Green Group

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee 27 February 2024 Item 7.7 – Housing Emergency Action Plan

Adds:

1.1.5 Welcomes the work completed on the Action Plan to date, including the multiple workshops with different stakeholders to develop the plan.

1.1.6 Notes that, to date, these workshops have taken place in discrete sessions and not allowed for the “cross-pollination” of ideas between service areas, stakeholders and representative groups.

1.1.7 Therefore agrees that, as part of the next stage of work with the Housing Emergency plan, a Housing Emergency summit is held to discuss the plan with all stakeholders in one place, with a particular focus on exploring what outcomes are expected to be achieved in relation to the various different actions contained in the plan to date.

1.1.8 Further agrees that some consideration will be given to how members of the public can contribute their ideas / views about the plan in advance of this summit, with their ideas to be discussed during the summit too.

Additionally:

1.1.9 Notes a lack of detail in the plan concerning support available for tenants in the private rental sector, despite this comprising a significant percentage of the city’s housing stock and exorbitant rents putting tenants at risk of falling into rent arrears and homelessness, increasing pressures on the homelessness service.

1.1.10 Therefore agrees that additional actions will be added into the plan to look at how the Council can support private tenants as a preventative spend / action against homelessness – for example, by exploring options for reinstating the Tenant Grant Fund – and that these additions will be reported at the next Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work committee.

Moved by: Councillor Ben Parker

Seconded by:

Addendum by the Liberal Democrat Group

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee 27 February 2024 Item 8.2 – Support for Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Displaced People

Committee adds:

- 1.3 Notes that 24th February 2024 marked two years have passed since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Edinburgh remains committed to being a welcoming city for everyone around the world fleeing persecution and where we can, will continue to work with Scottish and UK Governments, the third sector, relevant agencies, and residents, to offer constructive support to those escaping oppression. Further notes the Lord Provost and civic leaders continue to show solidarity with Ukraine and the Council continues to work with Governments for schemes to fund homes and other provision for refugees in addition to the work outlined in this report.
- 1.4 Notes its concern about the Home Office announcement on February 19th regarding the restrictions to family visas for Ukrainians ('Ukraine Family Scheme'), particularly on behalf of the of the Ukrainian community who have either settled or are residing in Edinburgh, but welcomes the 18-month visa extensions.
- 1.5 Requests the Convenor liaise with the Council Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs highlighting the success of the Welcome Hub since February 2022 and outlining the Council's opposition to the new restriction, requesting a recommencement of the Ukraine Family Scheme.
- 1.6 Requests a Business Bulletin update is provided to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work committee in three cycles updating Councillors on the status of the Welcome Hub, the work it continues to do to welcome refugees, and how it could also adapt to further global crises.

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

Addendum by the Green Group

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee 27 February 2024

Item 8.2 – Support for refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people

Adds:

1.3 Agrees to receive a twice-yearly update on progress towards the development of the “Edinburgh strategy for support to asylum seekers, refugees and displaced people” outlined in section 9.4 of the report, including updates on service level demand and any other relevant information for committee in the form of a report to Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee.

Moved by: Councillor Ben Parker
Seconded by:

Addendum by the Green Group

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee 27 February 2024

Item 8.8 – Internal Audit Reports – referral from the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

Notes from the report that: “The audit findings [...] support proposed changes to the organisational structure of the Housing and Homelessness Service” and that “an organisational review consultation is currently underway, with consultation closing on 28 March 2024”

Requests a briefing note is circulated to Committee members prior to 28th March 2024 with further details about the organisational review, proposed changes to the service and how these will address the issues identified in the internal audit reports, and other reports discussed at Committee. This briefing note should also outline what consultation / engagement has happened with unions.

Moved by: Councillor Ben Parker
Seconded by:

Addendum by the Liberal Democrat Group

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee 27 February 2024 Item 9.3 – By Councillor Parker – Opportunities for nature on HRA land

Committee

Adds new Point 12:

“Notes that Culture and Communities committee has requested a report regarding a ‘Right To Grow’ strategy on Council-owned land that is deemed suitable for cultivation which may also have implications on HRA land.”

Inserts into b) after “...Neighbourhood Environment Programme in 24-25”:

“, while still being led by residents,”

Inserts into b) after “...as part of the wider Council’s nature strategies”:

“, while noting that discussions may have already taken place with residents as part of the 24-25 NEPS.”

Re-number accordingly.

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

Amendment by the Conservative Group

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee 27 February 2024

Item 9.3 – By Councillor Parker – Opportunities for nature on HRA land

Adds at 12

e. The cost implications and officer time of taking on this work.

Amends 13 –

“Once the report is available then committee should consider whether the Local Housing Strategy will include a specific topic paper focused on improving opportunities for nature as part of it, and that this will be developed in consultation with relevant officers / external groups with expertise on nature and biodiversity”.

Moved by: Councillor Iain Whyte
Seconded by: Councillor Graeme Bruce