

Minutes

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Thursday 3 September 2020

Present

Councillors Kate Campbell (Convener), Watt (Vice-Convener), Booth, Jim Campbell, Key, Lang, McLellan, Miller, Mowat (substituting for Councillor Hutchison), Munro (item 4 onwards) and Work.

1. Work Programme

The Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee Work Programme for September 2020 was presented.

Decision

- 1) To note the Work Programme.
- 2) To request an annual update on the work of the Empty Homes Officer.
- 3) To note that the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan would be considered at a special meeting of the Committee.

(Reference – Work Programme, submitted.)

2. Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee Rolling Actions Log

The Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee Rolling Actions Log for September 2020 was presented.

Decision

- 1) To agree to close the following actions:
 - Action 1 – Rapid Access Accommodation with Support for Edinburgh's Rough Sleepers
 - Action 2 – Tenant and Customer Engagement
 - Action 3 – Empty Homes Update

- Action 4 – Mixed Tenure Improvement Strategy Update
 - Action 6 – Town Centre Fund – Allocations Report
 - Action 8 – Housing Revenue Account Budget Strategy 2020/21
 - Action 9 – Strategic Approach to Private Rented Sector
 - Action 12 – Original Edinburgh – Old Town Business Improvement District; Proposal and Ballot
 - Action 13 – Review of Scottish Government funded ‘No One Left Behind’ Employability Provision
 - Action 15 – Private Sector Leasing Scheme – Update (B agenda)
 - Action 16 – Marketing Edinburgh Update (B agenda)
 - Action 17 – Support for Build to Rent
 - Action 18 - Tenant Participation and Community Engagement
 - Action 19 - The EDI Group – Update report
 - Action 20 - Investment in Town Centres – Strategic Statement
- 2) To note that the following action would be transferred to the Policy and Sustainability Committee:
- Action 22 - Sustainability – Carbon Neutral Economy
- 3) To otherwise note the remaining outstanding actions.

(Reference – Rolling Actions Log, submitted.)

3. Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee Business Bulletin

The Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee Business Bulletin for September 2020 was presented.

Decision

To note the Business Bulletin.

(Reference – Business Bulletin, submitted.)

4. No Recourse to Public Funds – Legal Position

During the Covid-19 pandemic the Council, to support public health objectives, accommodated around 50 people who at that point were believed to have no recourse to public funds (NRPF). Under normal circumstances accommodation would not have been provided. A number of these service users were still likely to be in accommodation at the end of the public health crisis. The legal position was confirmed in relation to the provision of services to those with NRPF.

Decision

- 1) To note the current legal position on people who were homeless with NRPF.

- 2) To agree that the Council would continue to provide support to people who potentially would have NRPF until the end of the current public health crisis and should explore every available avenue to continue doing so after the end of the current crisis, including but not limited to the potential to work with third sector organisations to provide this support.
- 3) To agree to delegate authority to officers to exercise maximum flexibility, within the existing legal framework, to work in partnership with national and local agencies and organisations, to support people who had no recourse to public funds and were at risk of destitution.
- 4) To agree that officers would develop proposals for managing cases for those with NRPF and provide a report to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee within one cycle and that this report should explore every available avenue to continue to support those with NRPF, including but not limited to the potential to work with third sector organisations to provide this support.
- 5) To note that the Scottish Government and partners continue to engage with the UK Government around potential changes to legislation and resource provision for those with NRPF and to therefore agree that the Convener of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee would write to the relevant Ministers within the Scottish and UK Governments to urge them to uphold fundamental human rights and ensure that councils could always legally support those who were destitute or at immediate risk of becoming destitute, irrespective of their immigration status.
- 6) To ask officers to update Committee in the next business bulletin on actions taken by the Council and partners to prevent destitution by working with people with no recourse on retaining and finding employment opportunities.

(References – report by the Executive Director for Communities and Families, submitted.)

5. Homelessness Services – Update

An update was provided on the development of the Council's Temporary Accommodation Services, both prior to and during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Decision

- 1) To note the work to increase provision of self-contained properties to be used as temporary accommodation.
- 2) To note the development of a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) for Edinburgh.
- 3) To note the previously approved decision to invest in Home Share properties and the progress in developing this service so far.

- 4) To note the current temporary accommodation that had been contracted since the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 5) To note the work on an exit strategy and transition post lock down to find positive solutions for people moving on from accommodation provided as a public health response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 6) To note that further work would be carried out to develop additional accommodation options.
- 7) To request a briefing note on accommodation provision for homeless people.

(References – Policy and Sustainability Committee of 9 July 2020 (item 5); report by the Executive Director for Communities and Families, submitted.)

6. Homelessness and Housing Support - Revenue Monitoring 2020/21 – Month Three Position

The projected month three revenue monitoring position for the Homelessness and Housing Support service was set out, based on analysis of actual expenditure and income to the end of June 2020, and expenditure and income projections for the remainder of the financial year.

The projected net residual budget pressure of £5.7m was part of an overall net residual budget pressure of £8.3m for Communities and Families. The Executive Director of Communities and Families was fully committed to making all efforts to identify management action to reduce the budget pressures, while addressing the impact of the pandemic.

Decision

- 1) To note an overall net residual budget pressure of £8.3m for Communities and Families at month three.
- 2) To note that this pressure included a net residual budget pressure of £5.7m for the Homelessness and Housing Support service.
- 3) To note that the net pressure of £5.7m related to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 4) To note that an approved saving of £0.060m in 2020/21 had been assessed as amber, and was at risk of not being delivered until 2021/22.

(References – report by the Executive Director for Communities and Families, submitted.)

7. Revenue Monitoring Update – 2019/2020 Provisional Out-turn and 2020/2021 Month Three Position

The provisional out-turn for the 2019/2020 financial year and the projected month three revenue monitoring position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Place Directorate General Fund (GF) services were set out. The provisional outturn was based on the unaudited accounts for 2019/2020 and the month three forecast was based on analysis of actual expenditure and income to the end of June 2020, and expenditure and income projections for the remainder of the 2020/2021 financial year.

Decision

- 1) To note that the HRA provisional out-turn for 2019/2020 was a balanced position after a contribution of £7.477m to capital investment.
- 2) To note the Place GF provisional out-turn for 2019/2020 was a £7.0m overspend (£5.3m excluding Covid-19 impact). Services within the remit of this Committee achieved balanced provisional out-turns in 2019/2020.
- 3) To note that the HRA projected position for the 2020/2021 financial year was a balanced position after a contribution of £14.174m towards in-year capital investment and the future strategic housing investment programme.
- 4) To note that the Place GF revenue budget forecast for 2020/2021 was a projected £3.020m overspend (excluding Covid-19 impact) including a forecast budget pressure of £0.250m for services within the remit of this Committee.
- 5) To note that the Executive Director of Place was taking measures to reduce budget pressures and progress would be reported to Committee at agreed frequencies.

(References – report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

8. The City of Edinburgh Council's Assurance Statement on Housing Services

The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) required all social landlords to submit an Annual Assurance Statement, by 31 October each year, providing assurance that their organisation complied with the relevant requirements of chapter 3 of the Regulatory Framework.

The Assurance Statement confirmed where the Council met the SHR required standards and outcomes and provided information on areas for improvement and any associated management actions. Following committee approval, the Assurance Statement would be published on the SHR website.

Decision

To approve the City of Edinburgh Council Assurance Statement on housing services for submission to the SHR by annual deadline of 31 October 2020.

(Reference – report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

Thursday, 3rd September, 2020