

Minutes

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Thursday 14 January 2021

Present

Councillors Kate Campbell (Convener), Watt (Vice-Convener), Booth, Jim Campbell, Gordon (substituting for Councillor Key, items 1 – 4), Hutchison, Key (items 5 onwards), Lang, McLellan (items 4 onwards), Miller, Mowat (substituting for Councillor McLellan, items 1 – 3), Munro and Work.

1. Minutes

Decision

To approve the minute of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 5 November 2020 as a correct record.

2. Work Programme

The Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee Work Programme for January 2021 was presented.

Decision

To note the Work Programme.

(Reference – Work Programme, submitted.)

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

The Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee Rolling Actions Log for January 2021 was presented.

Decision

1) To agree to close the following actions:

- Action 1(2) – Marketing Edinburgh Update Action 4(2) – Internal Audit – Homelessness Services
- Action 2 – Edinburgh Living: Progress Update
- Action 3(3) – Edinburgh International Conference Centre Annual Update
- Action 5 – Advice Services Accreditation
- Action 6 – Business Bulletin
- Action 7(2) – Housing Sustainability Update
- Action 8 – Homelessness Services Internal Audit – Actions Update
- Action 10(1&2) – Edinburgh Project SEARCH – Delivery and Future Development

2) To otherwise note the remaining outstanding actions.

(Reference – Rolling Actions Log, submitted.)

4. Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee Business Bulletin

The Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee Business Bulletin for January 2021 was presented.

Decision

- 1) To agree to circulate the proposed response to the Scottish Government's Short Term Lets Consultation for comment before submission on 22 January 2021.
- 2) To note thanks to officers for their work on the North Cairntow Travelling Peoples Site.
- 3) To note the Business Bulletin.

(Reference – Business Bulletin, submitted.)

5. Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2021-2026

Approval was sought of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2021-2026 for submission to the Scottish Government. A pipeline of 10,036 affordable homes could be approved for site start and 11,370 potential completions delivered over the next five years through a mix of grant funding, private finance raised by Registered Social Landlords and private developers and HRA funding. Nearly 6,000 homes, mostly for social rent, could be delivered through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP) but this would require a significant uplift in Scottish Government grant funding. In the event that grant funding would not be available on the scale required, it would be necessary to accelerate delivery of affordable homes through other mechanisms set out in the SHIP.

Motion

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- 1) To approve the SHIP (2021-2026) for submission to the Scottish Government.
 - 2) To note progress in meeting the Council's commitment to deliver a programme to build at least 10,000 social and affordable homes over the next five years, with a plan to build 20,000 by 2027.
 - 3) To agree to provide a Business Bulletin update in March on the South East Scotland Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA).
- moved by Councillor Kate Campbell, seconded by Councillor Watt

Amendment 1

- 1) To approve the SHIP (2021-2026) for submission to the Scottish Government.
 - 2) To note concern in meeting the Council's commitment to deliver a programme to build at least 10,000 social and affordable homes over the next five years, with a plan to build 20,000 by 2027.
 - 3) To agree to provide a Business Bulletin update in March on the South East Scotland Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA).
- moved by Councillor Jim Campbell, seconded by Councillor McLellan

Amendment 2

- 1) To approve the SHIP (2021-2026) for submission to the Scottish Government.
 - 2) To note progress in meeting the Council's commitment to deliver a programme to build at least 10,000 social and affordable homes between 2017 and 2022, with a plan to build 20,000 by 2027.
 - 3) To agree to provide a Business Bulletin update in March on the South East Scotland Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA).
- moved by Councillor Lang, seconded by Councillor Hutchison

In accordance with Standing Order 22.12, Amendment 2 was accepted as an amendment to the motion.

Voting

For the motion - 7 votes
For the amendment - 4 votes

(For the motion – Councillors Booth, Kate Campbell, Key, Miller, Munro, Watt and Work.

For the amendment – Councillors Jim Campbell, Hutchison, Lang and McLellan.)

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Kate Campbell:

- 1) To approve the SHIP (2021-2026) for submission to the Scottish Government.
- 2) To note progress in meeting the Council's commitment to deliver a programme to build at least 10,000 social and affordable homes between 2017 and 2022, with a plan to build 20,000 by 2027.
- 3) To agree to provide a Business Bulletin update in March on the South East Scotland Housing Needs and Demand Assessment (HNDA).

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 31 October 2019 (item 7); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

6. Land Strategy to Support Delivery of Affordable Housing and Brownfield Regeneration

An update was provided on the progress with the implementation of the land strategy for Council led housing developments. Land supply continued to be one of the main risks to the delivery of brownfield sites and affordable housing. Whilst good progress was being made, further land acquisition by the Council and new investment models and partnerships with the private sector would be required to get private and public sector sites developed. This approach aligned with the preferred option for urban area development contained within Choices for Cityplan 2030 which also promoted public sector partners working closer together.

Motion

- 1) To note the intention to complete the purchase of the former Liberton hospital site for a Council led housing development by the end of the financial year.
- 2) To note that officers would continue to pursue opportunities to acquire private sector land where this would support wider land assembly and delivery of regeneration outcomes.
- 3) To note the need for continuing commitment from public sector partners to realise the delivery of Council and Scottish Government's objectives; including building resilient and sustainable places, and transition to net zero carbon.
- 4) To note that new investment models and partnerships with external organisations including housing associations, housing trusts and the private sector were needed to accelerate development of private sector land.
- 5) To agree to refer the report to the Planning Committee for information.

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- 6) To agree to provide an annual update report to committee in line with the annual SHIP report.
 - 7) To agree to provide an update in the March Business Bulletin on what the £2.8bn would be used for.
- moved by Councillor Kate Campbell, seconded by Councillor Watt

Amendment 1

- 1) To note the intention to complete the purchase of the former Liberton hospital site for a Council led housing development by the end of the financial year.
 - 2) To note that officers would continue to pursue opportunities to acquire private sector land where this would support wider land assembly and delivery of regeneration outcomes.
 - 3) To note the need for continuing commitment from public sector partners to realise the delivery of Council and Scottish Government's objectives; including building resilient and sustainable places, and transition to net zero carbon.
 - 4) To note that new investment models and partnerships with the private sector were needed to accelerate development of private sector land.
 - 5) To note that the Scottish Government did not intend to proceed with the introduction of compulsory sale orders (CSOs) before the end of this session of Parliament, despite them being a key recommendation of the Scottish Land Commission and an SNP manifesto commitment in 2016; to note that such a mechanism could have a major impact on bringing empty homes and vacant land into use, and therefore to agree that the Convenor would write to Scottish Government urging them to introduce such a power at the earliest available opportunity.
 - 6) To agree to refer the report to the Planning Committee for information.
 - 7) To agree to provide an annual update report to committee in line with the annual SHIP report.
 - 8) To agree to provide an update in the March Business Bulletin on what the £2.8bn would be used for.
- moved by Councillor Booth, seconded by Councillor Miller

Amendment 2

- 1) To note the intention to complete the purchase of the former Liberton hospital site for a Council led housing development by the end of the financial year.

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- 2) To note that officers would continue to pursue opportunities to acquire private sector land where this would support wider land assembly and delivery of regeneration outcomes.
- 3) To note the need for continuing commitment from public sector partners to realise the delivery of Council and Scottish Government's objectives; including building resilient and sustainable places, and transition to net zero carbon.
- 4) To note that new investment models and partnerships with the private sector were needed to accelerate development of private sector land.
- 5) To agree to refer the report to the Planning Committee for information.
- 6) To agree to provide an annual update report to committee in line with the annual SHIP report.
- 7) To agree to provide an update in the March Business Bulletin on what the £2.8bn would be used for.

- moved by Councillor Jim Campbell, seconded by Councillor Hutchison

In accordance with Standing Order 22.12, Amendment 1 was adjusted and accepted as an addendum to the motion.

Voting

For the motion	-	8 votes
For the amendment	-	3 votes

(For the motion – Councillors Booth, Kate Campbell, Key, Lang, Miller, Munro, Watt and Work.

For the amendment – Councillors Jim Campbell, Hutchison, and McLellan.)

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Kate Campbell:

- 1) To note the intention to complete the purchase of the former Liberton hospital site for a Council led housing development by the end of the financial year.
- 2) To note that officers would continue to pursue opportunities to acquire private sector land where this would support wider land assembly and delivery of regeneration outcomes.
- 3) To note the need for continuing commitment from public sector partners to realise the delivery of Council and Scottish Government's objectives; including building resilient and sustainable places, and transition to net zero carbon.

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- 4) To note that new investment models and partnerships with external organisations including housing associations, housing trusts and the private sector were needed to accelerate development of private sector land.
- 5) To note that the Scottish Government had stated that, given constraints on the legislative programme, they did not expect to be in a position to progress the introduction of compulsory sale orders (CSOs) before the end of this session of Parliament, to note that they were a key recommendation of the Scottish Land Commission and an SNP manifesto commitment in 2016; to note that such a mechanism could have a major impact on bringing empty homes and vacant land into use, and therefore to agree that the Convenor would write to Scottish Government urging them to introduce such a power at the earliest available opportunity.
- 6) To agree to refer the report to the Planning Committee for information.
- 7) To agree to provide an annual update report to committee in line with the annual SHIP report.
- 8) To agree to provide an update in the March Business Bulletin on what the £2.8bn would be used for.

(References – Housing and Economy Committee of 22 March 2018 (item 11); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

7. Edinburgh Living Annual Report 2019

The activities carried out by Edinburgh Living over the financial year 2019 were set out, as was the financial position at the end of the year and key areas of work for 2020. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the external audit of the financial statements for 2019 had been delayed resulting in late drafting of this report. The annual report for 2020 would be prepared for Committee in 2021.

Decision

- 1) To note the 2019 Annual report.
- 2) To note the progress made to establish Edinburgh Living over 2019.
- 3) To note that the 2020 Annual Report would be submitted to Committee following completion of the 2020 financial audit in 2021.
- 4) To refer this report to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee in line with Edinburgh Living's governance arrangements.

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

Declaration of Interests

Councillors Kate Campbell and Watt declared a non-financial in the above item as Directors of Edinburgh Living.

8. Empty Homes Update

The approach to bringing private sector empty homes back into use was outlined, focusing on the work of the Empty Homes Officer (EHO) who was recruited in October 2019.

Motion

- 1) To note the annual update on private sector empty homes, which focused on the work being undertaken by the Council's Empty Homes Officer (EHO).
 - 2) To agree that details would be provided on the process for following up on debt recovery as at para 4.2 of the report.
- moved by Councillor Kate Campbell, seconded by Councillor Watt

Amendment

- 1) To note the annual update on private sector empty homes, which focused on the work being undertaken by the Council's Empty Homes Officer (EHO), and to thank the EHO for their dedicated work on bringing empty homes back into use over the past year.
- 2) To note that funding for the EHO post from the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership was only for 2 years, and there was therefore a need for the council to build a case for the mainstreaming of the funding for the post.
- 3) To note that EHO posts usually generated significant cost savings for local authorities through, for example, debt recovery; to note this was alluded to in section 4.2 of the report but that a detailed analysis of cost savings was not made explicit in the report.
- 4) To note that section 5 of the report referred to potential proactive work with council tax and homelessness service colleagues in order to increase the effectiveness of the EHO and support wider council priorities on homelessness, but that no specific proposals were included.
- 5) To therefore agree to receive a further report within three cycles setting out the potential to mainstream funding for the EHO post and to greater embed the work of the EHO within the wider homelessness and council tax teams in order to support wider council objectives on ending homelessness.

In accordance with Standing Order 22.12, the amendment was accepted as an addendum to the motion.

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Kate Campbell:

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- 1) To note the annual update on private sector empty homes, which focused on the work being undertaken by the Council's Empty Homes Officer (EHO), and to thank the EHO for their dedicated work on bringing empty homes back into use over the past year.
- 2) To note that funding for the EHO post from the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership was only for 2 years, and there was therefore a need for the council to build a case for the mainstreaming of the funding for the post.
- 3) To note that EHO posts usually generated significant cost savings for local authorities through, for example, debt recovery; to note this was alluded to in section 4.2 of the report but that a detailed analysis of cost savings was not made explicit in the report.
- 4) To note that section 5 of the report referred to potential proactive work with council tax and homelessness service colleagues in order to increase the effectiveness of the EHO and support wider council priorities on homelessness, but that no specific proposals were included.
- 5) To therefore agree to receive a further report within three cycles setting out the potential to mainstream funding for the EHO post and to greater embed the work of the EHO within the wider homelessness and council tax teams in order to support wider council objectives on ending homelessness.
- 6) To agree that details would be provided on the process for following up on debt recovery as at para 4.2 of the report.

(References – Act of Council No. 2 of 21 February 2019; report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

9. Covid-19 Business Support

The City of Edinburgh Council had been supporting the distribution of funding for several Scottish Government schemes to address financial hardship in businesses during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. To date, grant awards had been made to over 11,300 Edinburgh businesses, with funding in excess of £123,000,000.

Decision

- 1) To note the work that had been done to date on distributing Covid-19 grant support to businesses in Edinburgh.
- 2) To agree to discharge paragraph 3.1.8 of the motion by Councillor Cameron, as approved at the City of Edinburgh Council of 19 November 2020.

(References – Act of Council No. 5 of 19 November 2020; report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

10. Edinburgh Project SEARCH

Job Coaching provision for the Edinburgh Project SEARCH (EPS) programme was currently provided by Into Work through a grant with Service Level Agreement (SLA) which had been in place since 2014 and had been extended three times.

The current grant agreement would end in July 2021 and continued delivery of the Job Coaching service for the EPS programme beyond this point would require a new agreement. Officers had considered three different methods of securing this support and recommended bringing this service into the Council.

Decision

- 1) To approve the recommendation to bring in house Edinburgh Project SEARCH Job Coach support.
- 2) To note the further complications in the delivery of the programme in 2020/21.
- 3) To support the ambition to offer additional capacity in future programmes.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 5 November 2020 (item 14); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

11. Edinburgh Blended Employability Service

Due to significant changes in the labour market and the new operational context as a result of Covid-19, the following three services had been reviewed using a coproduction methodology to ensure they remained fit for purpose and value for money: Supported Employment Service (All in Edinburgh), Complex Needs Employability Service (EnCompass) and Edinburgh Targeted and Integrated Employability Service (Next Step).

Approval was sought to commission a Blended Employability Service for Edinburgh that would offer person centred employability services for each of the individual target groups.

Decision

- 1) To note the co-production exercise and review undertaken to update, develop and realign the specifications for the Supported Employment, Complex Needs Employability and Edinburgh Targeted and Integrated Employability Service (ETIES) contracts.
- 2) To consider the findings and endorse progression to the tendering phase for an Edinburgh Blended Employability Service to replace the current three services.

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

Declaration of Interests

Councillor Gordon declared a non-financial in the above item as Chair of Capital City Partnership.

Councillor Watt declared a non-financial in the above item as a Director of Capital City Partnership.

12. Edinburgh Guarantee for All

An update was provided on plans to build on the existing Edinburgh Guarantee, to widen the reach of the programme in response to the challenges faced by people with additional barriers to employment as a result of Covid-19.

Decision

- 1) To note the developments in relation to Edinburgh Guarantee for All (EGFA) and the support from Standard Life Aberdeen, as lead employer, in assigning a member of staff to the EGFA team to deliver the business engagement aspect of the initiative.
- 2) To agree to discharge paragraph 3.1.7 of the motion by Councillor Cameron, as approved at the City of Edinburgh Council of 19 November 2020.

(References – Act of Council No. 5 of 19 November 2020; report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

13. Scottish Government Funding for Employability Support

In response to the economic crisis arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, the Scottish Government had made funding available to local authorities to offer additional support to those whose employment or life chances had been affected. The amounts and purposes of each funding stream were noted and approval was sought for the swift award of these funds to organisations who were best placed to support these groups.

Decision

- 1) To note the funding which had been allocated by the Scottish Government for Employability support in Edinburgh, in response to Covid-19.
- 2) To approve the planned activity set out in this report, in line with the Scottish Government's funding criteria and aligned with locally identified and evidenced priorities.

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

14. Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) – Updated Recommendations and Council Response

The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) was reconvened in summer 2020 to provide updated recommendations to the Scottish Government, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. A total of 104 recommendations were made, which the Scottish Government accepted in principle. Following these, the Scottish Government

updated the Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan to reflect the new HARSAG recommendations.

- 1) The Council's response to the HARSAG recommendations was set out.
- 2) To agree to circulate the Streetwork contact number to elected members.

Decision

To note the Council's response to the latest HARSAG recommendations.

(Reference – report by the Chief Executive, submitted.)

15. Place Directorate - Revenue Monitoring 2020/21 – Month Seven Position

The projected month seven revenue monitoring position was set out for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Place Directorate General Fund (GF) services. The month seven forecast was based on analysis of actual expenditure and income to the end of October 2020, and expenditure and income projections for the remainder of the 2020/2021 financial year.

Decision

- 1) To note that the HRA projected position for the 2020/2021 financial year was a balanced position after a contribution of £12.916m towards in-year capital investment and the future strategic housing investment programme.
- 2) To note that the Place GF revenue budget forecast for 2020/2021 was a projected £0.516m overspend (excluding Covid-19 impact) including a forecast budget pressure of £0.098m for services within the remit of this Committee.
- 3) To note that the Place GF revenue budget forecast for 2020/2021 in respect of the net cost impact of Covid-19 was forecast to be circa £29m. £2.150m of this budget pressure relates to services within the remit of this Committee.
- 4) 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 – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 5 November 2020 (item 21); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

16. Homelessness and Housing Support - Revenue Monitoring 2020/21 – Month Seven Position

The projected month seven 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 October 2020, and expenditure and income projections for the remainder of the financial year.

Decision

- 1) To note an overall net residual budget pressure of £14.0m for Communities and Families at month seven.
- 2) To note that this pressure included a net residual budget pressure of £9.0m for the Homelessness and Housing Support service.
- 3) To note that the net pressure of £9.0m 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 – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 5 November 2020 (item 22); report by the Chief Executive, submitted.)

17. Internal Audit: Overdue Findings and Key Performance Indicators at 30 October 2020 – referral from the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee

The Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee had referred a report on Internal Audit Overdue Findings and Key Performance Indicators at 30 October 2020, which provided an overview of the status of the overdue Internal Audit (IA) findings as at 30 October 2020, to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee for Information.

Decision

To note the report.

(References – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee of 8 December 2020 (item 5; report by the Chief Internal Auditor, submitted.)