

Minutes

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Thursday 18 March 2021

Present

Councillors Kate Campbell (Convener), Watt (Vice-Convener), Booth (items 1 to 6, items 10 onwards), Jim Campbell, Mary Campbell (substituting for Councillor Miller), Hutchison, Key, Lang, McLellan, Munro and Work.

1. Minutes

Decision

- 1) To approve the minute of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 14 January 2021 as a correct record, subject to the following correction: at Item 8 – Empty Homes Update – mover and seconder of the amendment should read Councillor Booth and Councillor Miller, respectively.
- 2) To approve the minute of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 29 January 2021 as a correct record.

2. Work Programme

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

Decision

- 1) To agree to close the following actions:
 - Action 2 – Business Improvement Districts
 - Action 5 – Business Bulletin
 - Action 6 – Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2021-2026
 - Action 7 (1&2) – Land Strategy to Support Delivery of Affordable Housing and Brownfield Regeneration
 - Action 9 – Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) – Updated Recommendations and Council Response
- 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 March 2021 was presented.

Decision

- 1) To agree to circulate the schedule of projects for the Town Centre Fund.
- 2) To note the Business Bulletin.

(Reference – Business Bulletin, submitted.)

5. Allocation Policy for Council Homes

In response to a motion by Councillor Kate Campbell on 4 February 2021, information was provided on the policy framework for letting Council homes and how this aligned within the regulatory and statutory requirements for social housing allocations. The approach was to seek to support households with exceptional and complex needs.

Decision

- 1) To note the information provided on the allocation policy, the operational processes and how these complied with the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) Assurance requirements and the legal framework governing allocations.
- 2) To note the approach taken where households had known specific or complex needs in terms of housing options and access to suitable housing.
- 3) To agree actions to improve advice and information on access to housing and management of exceptional housing need to improve outcomes for more vulnerable households outlined in paragraphs 4.28 to 4.32 of the report.

- 4) To agree to receive a further report to the next Committee on addressing exceptional need following engagement with key stakeholders.
- 5) To agree that the report would be circulated to all elected members for information

(References – Act of Council No. 10 of 4 February 2021; report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

6. Housing Revenue Account (HRA): Impact of a One-Year Rent Freeze

The impact of the one year rent freeze on the 2021/22 revenue budget was set out, outlining the potential mitigations that would need to be put in place in 2022/23 to secure the 10-year £2.8bn capital investment programme to deliver Council commitments, including the delivery of new homes and net zero carbon emissions by 2030, to create places where people would want to live that would keep them safe, secure, healthy and connected through a holistic area-based regeneration approach.

Motion for Adjournment

During discussion of the above item, Councillor Booth requested in terms of Standing Order 21.1, that the meeting be adjourned to allow discussion to take place with regards to the Green Group Amendment.

- moved by Councillor Booth, seconded by Councillor Mary Campbell

Voting

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---------|
| For the adjournment | - | 6 votes |
| Against the adjournment | - | 5 votes |

(For the adjournment: Councillors Booth, Jim Campbell, Mary Campbell, Hutchison, Lang and McLellan.

Against the adjournment: Councillors Kate Campbell, Key, Munro, Watt and Work.)

Decision

To approve the motion that the meeting be adjourned for discussion.

Resumption

Following resumption of the meeting, the Green Group Amendment was submitted with adjusted wording.

Motion

- 1) To note the impact of this one-year rent freeze on the 2021/22 revenue budget.
 - 2) To agree that the mitigations to the one-year rent freeze would form part of the annual HRA Business Plan review and 2022/23 budget consultation process.
 - 3) To note that social rents in Edinburgh were 40% of PRS rents, the largest difference in Scotland between the private rented sector and council social rents. To further note that there were over 20,400 people on the Edindex register for housing, and of that around 5,500 have priority. On average homeless households were waiting over 18 months for social housing.
 - 4) To note that there was considerable support from tenants, as evidenced through the budget consultation, for increased investment in existing homes and estates and for delivery of new Council social homes.
 - 5) To note that the Scottish Government had published Housing 2040 which set out a strategy for housing in Scotland by 2040. To note that this included legislative changes, new funding models, new funding streams and development and research that would be carried out to help deliver the strategy over the short, medium and longer term.
 - 6) To therefore request that officers would bring back a report to committee setting out the opportunities for Edinburgh, and identifying additional funding streams that could be accessed to increase investment and the likely timeframes for accessing this funding. This should focus particularly on opportunities for increased investment in existing housing stock, regeneration and meeting our sustainability targets through retrofitting, and should form part of the annual HRA review including any risks to accessing these funding streams.
- moved by Councillor Kate Campbell, seconded by Councillor Watt

Amendment 1

- 1) To note the impact of this one-year rent freeze on the 2021/22 revenue budget.
- 2) To note the four potential options for mitigation set out at paragraph 4.9 of the report; to agree that all steps should be explored to avoid a rent increase of more than 2% in future years to “compensate” for the rent freeze this year. Edinburgh’s council rents were the most expensive in Scotland by a considerable margin, to therefore agree that officers should explore all options in order to avoid such a rent rise.
- 3) To note recent Scottish Government commitments on new affordable housing and energy efficiency improvements, and therefore to agree to seek additional external capital funding to deliver a rephased capital programme focused on the key priorities of delivering new socially-rented homes and achieving zero carbon standards.

- 4) To agree that the mitigations set out in the report, subject to the points agreed above, would form part of the annual HRA Business Plan review and 2022/23 budget consultation process.
- moved by Councillor Booth, seconded by Councillor Mary Campbell

Amendment 2

- 1) To note the impact of this one-year rent freeze on the 2021/22 revenue budget.
- 2) To agree that the mitigations to the one-year rent freeze would form part of the annual HRA Business Plan review and 2022/23 budget consultation process.
- 3) To agree that group housing spokespeople should be consulted on the wording of the 2022/23 budget consultation before being issued.
- moved by Councillor Lang, seconded by Councillor Work

In accordance with Standing Order 22.12, Amendment 1 and Amendment 2 were accepted as an amendment and an addendum to the motion respectively.

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Kate Campbell:

- 1) To note the impact of this one-year rent freeze on the 2021/22 revenue budget.
- 2) To note that social rents in Edinburgh were 40% of PRS rents, the largest difference in Scotland between the private rented sector and council social rents. To further note that there were over 20,400 people on the Edindex register for housing, and of that around 5,500 have priority. On average homeless households were waiting over 18 months for social housing.
- 3) To note that there was considerable support from tenants, as evidenced through the budget consultation, for increased investment in existing homes and estates and for delivery of new Council social homes.
- 4) To note that the Scottish Government had published Housing 2040 which set out a strategy for housing in Scotland by 2040. To note that this included legislative changes, new funding models, new funding streams and development and research that would be carried out to help deliver the strategy over the short, medium and longer term.
- 5) To therefore request that officers would bring back a report to committee setting out the opportunities for Edinburgh, and identifying additional funding streams that could be accessed to increase investment and the likely timeframes for accessing this funding. This should focus particularly on opportunities for increased investment in existing housing stock, regeneration and meeting our sustainability targets through retrofitting, and should form part of the annual HRA review including any risks to accessing these funding streams.

- 6) To note the four potential options for mitigation set out at paragraph 4.9 of the report; to agree that all steps should be explored to avoid a rent increase of more than 2% in future years to “compensate” for the rent freeze this year. Edinburgh’s council rents were the most expensive in Scotland by a considerable margin, to therefore agree that officers should explore all options in order to avoid such a rent rise.
- 7) To note recent Scottish Government commitments on new affordable housing and energy efficiency improvements, and therefore to agree to seek additional external capital funding to deliver a rephased capital programme focused on the key priorities of delivering new socially-rented homes and achieving zero carbon standards.
- 8) To agree that the mitigations set out in the report, subject to the points agreed above, would form part of the annual HRA Business Plan review and 2022/23 budget consultation process.
- 9) To agree that group housing spokespeople should be consulted on the wording of the 2022/23 budget consultation before being issued.

(References – Act of Council No. 4 of 18 February 2021; report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

7. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme 2021/22

On 18 February 2021, the City of Edinburgh Council approved an outline plan to invest £2.8bn over ten years to deliver Council commitments. The Council also agreed to accelerate £1.860m investment to improve internal common stairwells and to increase resources for the Mixed Tenure Improvement Service (MTIS).

The details of the £87.386m HRA capital programme for 2021/22 were set out. The programme would include new homes as well as investment in tenants’ homes and estates.

Decision

- 1) To note the planned HRA capital programme for investment in 2021/22 of £87.386 million.
- 2) To agree to receive a further report at the June committee on the revised capital programme, following consultation with members, and to provide further detail of the three to five-year programme.
- 3) To agree that the £1.86m agreed as part of the budget process would be focused on blocks in communities with the highest levels of poverty in the city. Officers should engage with housing teams, as well as councillors, to target resources where there was the greatest need.

- 4) To request as part of the capital programme report to come back that officers would undertake a review of properties where there could be significant issues with damp, mould and condensation. The capital programme should seek to invest in capital works that address any underlying issues which could contribute to damp mould and condensation, and bring back a plan for how our housing stock could be analysed to gain an understanding of where there could be issues, and an investment strategy to address these.

(References – Act of Council No. 4 of 18 February 2021; report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

8. Local Connection: Update

An update was provided on modifications to local connection referrals. The Scottish Government had advised that any changes would not take effect in May 2021 as was expected. No alternative date for the commencement of any changes had been provided.

Decision

- 1) To note the delay to any modifications to local connection referrals.
- 2) To note that further updates would be provided once more information became available.

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

9. Community-Led Factoring

In response to a motion by Councillor Laidlaw to the City of Edinburgh Council on 15 October 2020, an update was provided on regeneration of the Craigmillar estate and the discussions with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and the Neighbourhood Alliance (NA) regarding opportunities for community factoring in new developments.

Motion

- 1) To note the update on Craigmillar regeneration and the engagement that had taken place with RSLs and the NA regarding community led factoring.
 - 2) To agree to discharge the motion on Community Factoring approved by City of Edinburgh Council on 15 October 2020.
 - 3) To note that officers would continue to engage with partner organisations in Craigmillar to improve estate management and explore opportunities for local people to become more involved in the maintenance of the estate.
- moved by Councillor Kate Campbell, seconded by Councillor Watt

Amendment

- 1) To note the update on Craigmillar regeneration and the engagement that had taken place with RSLs and the NA regarding community led factoring.
 - 2) To agree to discharge the motion on Community Factoring approved by City of Edinburgh Council on 15 October 2020.
 - 3) To agree that officers would continue to engage with partner organisations in Craigmillar and across the city to improve estate management, explore opportunities for local people to become more involved in the maintenance of the estate, and continue to investigate how areas which were not covered by any factoring arrangements could be better served.
 - 4) To agree to receive a progress update on this work within 12 months, including possible solutions for any areas not currently covered by factoring arrangements.
- moved by Councillor Mary Campbell, seconded by Councillor Lang

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

Decision

To approve the adjusted motion by Councillor Kate Campbell.

(References – Act of Council No. 18 of 15 October 2020; report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

10. Business Improvement Districts

The recommended process was set out for confirming the Council's vote, where applicable, when establishing Business Improvement Districts (BIDs).

Motion

To agree the process for determining the Council's vote(s) in a BID Ballot as follows:

- 1) In the event that the Council had multiple properties within the BID area, the Council would cast the same vote for all properties.
- 2) Should the Convener and Vice Convener of Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work, the Convener and Vice Convener of Finance and Resources and local ward Councillors not reach consensus on how the Council vote should be cast, they would be asked to cast one further vote by way of a poll. The majority outcome of the poll would determine the Council overall vote.
- 3) In the event that there was no consensus reached and there was no overall majority, responsibility for the Council's vote(s) would be delegated to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Leader and Depute Leader of the Council.

- moved by Councillor Kate Campbell, seconded by Councillor Watt

Amendment 1

To agree the process for determining the Council's vote(s) in a BID Ballot as follows:

- 1) In the event that the Council had multiple properties within the BID area, the Council would cast the same vote for all properties.
- 2) Should the Convener and Vice Convener of Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work, the Convener and Vice Convener of Finance and Resources and local ward Councillors not reach consensus on how the Council vote should be cast, they would be asked to cast one further vote by way of a poll. The majority outcome of the poll would determine the Council overall vote.
- 3) In the event that there was no consensus reached and there was no overall majority, responsibility for the Council's vote(s) would be delegated to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the group leaders.

- moved by Councillor Mary Campbell, seconded by Councillor Booth

Amendment 2

To agree the process for determining the Council's vote(s) in a BID Ballot as follows:

- 1) In the event that the Council had multiple properties within the BID area, the Council would cast the same vote for all properties.
- 2) Should the Convener and Vice Convener of Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work, the Convener and Vice Convener of Finance and Resources and local ward Councillors not reach consensus on how the Council vote should be cast, they would be asked to cast one further vote by way of a poll. The majority outcome of the poll would determine the Council overall vote.
- 3) In the event of a tie in any poll carried out under 1.1.2, the Leader of the Council should be given a casting vote.

- moved by Councillor Lang, seconded by Councillor Work

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

Voting

- | | | |
|-------------------|---|---------|
| For the motion | - | 9 votes |
| For the amendment | - | 2 votes |

(For the motion – Councillors Jim Campbell, Kate Campbell, Hutchison, Key, Lang, McLellan, Munro, Watt and Work.

For the amendment – Councillors Booth and Mary Campbell.)

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Kate Campbell:

To agree the process for determining the Council's vote(s) in a BID Ballot as follows:

- 1) In the event that the Council had multiple properties within the BID area, the Council would cast the same vote for all properties.
- 2) Should the Convener and Vice Convener of Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work, the Convener and Vice Convener of Finance and Resources and local ward Councillors not reach consensus on how the Council vote should be cast, they would be asked to cast one further vote by way of a poll. The majority outcome of the poll would determine the Council overall vote.
- 3) In the event of a tie in any poll carried out under 1.1.2, the Leader of the Council should be given a casting vote.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 20 January 2020 (item 11); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

11. Place Directorate - Revenue Monitoring 2020/21 – Month Nine Position

The projected month nine revenue monitoring position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Place Directorate General Fund (GF) was set out for services within the scope of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee. The month nine position was based on analysis of actual expenditure and income to the end of December 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 after a contribution of £10.598m towards the Strategic Housing Capital Investment Programme.
- 2) To note that the Place GF 'business as usual' revenue budget forecast for 2020/2021 was a projected £0.128m overspend (excluding Covid-19 impact) 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 £2.150m for services within the remit of this Committee.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 14 January 2021 (item 15); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

12. Homelessness and Housing Support - Revenue Monitoring 2020/21 – Month Nine Position

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

Decision

- 1) To note an overall net residual budget pressure of £13.1m for Communities and Families at month nine.
- 2) To note that this pressure included a net residual budget pressure of £9.3m for the Homelessness and Housing Support service.
- 3) To note that the net pressure of £9.3m related primarily 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 14 January 2021 (item 16); report by the Chief Executive, submitted.)

13. Housing Land Audit and Completions Programme 2020 – referral from the Planning Committee

The Planning Committee had referred a report which summarised the findings of the 2020 annual Housing Land Audit and Completions Programme to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee for Information.

Decision

To note the report.

(References – Planning Committee of 3 February 2021 (item 11); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

14. Emergency Motion by Councillor Kate Campbell – Repairs

The Convener ruled that the following item, notice of which had been given at the start of the meeting, be considered as a matter of urgency to allow the Committee to give early consideration to this matter.

The following motion by Councillor Kate Campbell was submitted in terms of Standing Order 17:

“Committee agrees to receive two additional reports alongside the Housing Service Improvement Plan.

The first report will focus on the improvement plan for the repairs service. This report should include a framework for analysis of our data on repairs to identify where there may be specific issues relating to communication, customer engagement and interaction, completion of works, and complaints.

Further, the report should cover:

- The roll out of Total Mobile to ensure that this is being used effectively, and review if the roll out to housing officers could be accelerated.
- The process around missed appointments, how these are monitored, and whether there could be improved processes for tenants to report these.
- Monitoring of tenant satisfaction on repairs, including processes for how tenants feedback on repairs carried out
- Processes around booking follow up appointments, including timeframes for when work will be carried out
- Details of the resolutions teams and the improvements that can be made to the complaints process including specific named contact for tenants in multi-storey properties
- A review of the work being carried out under the Covid 19 restrictions to ensure that it is capturing all instances where there is a risk of harm to tenants

Agrees this will be accompanied by a plan of action to address all issues raised and follow on reports where necessary.

Agrees to receive a second report specifically outlining the extent of requests to deal with damp, condensation and mould and an improved and effective approach to damp and condensation which sets out a process for addressing these types of repairs. This process should include confirmation that the cause of an issue has been resolved, as well as all impacts including fully removing or treating damp, mould and damaged surfaces, reinstating them, and referring tenants for additional support for example through Changeworks.

Notes the challenges with operating under the current Covid 19 restrictions. Therefore requests that a plan for operating under current restrictions is developed in the short term, prioritising addressing issues that cause a risk of harm, and that a further process is developed for implementation once restrictions are lifted.

This process will be fully developed and embedded in the repairs team through training, and implementation of a series of checks, to ensure that no tenant falls through the cracks.”

- moved by Councillor Kate Campbell, seconded by Councillor Watt

Decision

To approve the motion by Councillor Kate Campbell.

Thursday, 18th March, 2021