

Minutes

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Thursday 2 September 2021

Present

Councillors Kate Campbell (Convener), Watt (Vice-Convener), Jim Campbell, Day, Key, Lang, McLellan, Mowat (substituting for Councillor Webber), Rae, Staniforth and Work.

1. Minutes

Decision

- 1) To approve the minute of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 3 June 2021 as a correct record.
- 2) To approve the minute of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 25 June 2021 as a correct record.

2. Work Programme

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

Decision

- 1) To agree to close the following actions:

- Action 4 – Housing Revenue Account (HRA): Impact of a One-Year Rent Freeze
 - Action 9 (3, 4 & 5) – Approach to Dampness, Mould and Condensation in Council Homes
 - Action 12 (1 & 2) – Place Based Investment Programme – 2021/22 Allocations
- 2) To agree not to close Action 1 (2) – EICC Update to request further information and figures on how the EICC planned to reduce their carbon footprint and how much by.
- 3) 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 September 2021 was presented.

Decision

To note the Business Bulletin.

(Reference – Business Bulletin, submitted.)

5. Young Person's Guarantee Delivery

Edinburgh had been awarded funding totalling £4.80m for financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22 from the Scottish Government for delivery of the Young Person's Guarantee (YPG) ambition. The report set out how the funding for 2020/21 was used and provided recommendations on how the funding for 2021/22 could be utilised.

Decision

- 1) To note the funding which had been allocated by the Scottish Government for delivery of the Young Person's Guarantee ambition in Edinburgh in the financial year 2021/22.
- 2) To note the priority groups and gaps in provision identified.
- 3) To approve the recommendations of the Local Employability Partnership (LEP) to allocate funding to the activities set out in paragraph 4.9 of the report.
- 4) To approve the use of a small grants process, as set out in paragraphs 4.10 – 4.12, and to agree to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Convener and Vice Convener of Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work for the award of grants under this programme.

- 5) To note the importance of Fair Work and Edinburgh's commitment to becoming a Living Wage City. Therefore to ask officers to bring back a report on Employer Recruitment Incentives (ERIs) and how we could ensure that where young people's employment was being subsidised through ERIs they were either receiving the Real Living Wage (RLW), or gaining qualifications and skills which would enable them to enter a profession and earn above the RLW on completion of their training.
- 6) Further, the report should:
 - i) Identify how we could subsidise young people who were living in poverty, and who would not be able to take on an apprenticeship, so that those young people would have the same opportunities available to them as young people from households not in poverty.
 - ii) Ensure that any employment subsidised by ERIs did not offer varying rates of pay depending on age, and embedded the principle that people doing the same job should be entitled to the same rate of pay.

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

6. Network of Employability Support and Training

Approval was sought to commission a replacement Network of Employability Support and Training (NEST) that would complement Edinburgh's current employability services and provide person-centred support for each of the individual target groups.

Decision

- 1) To note the co-production exercise and review undertaken in order to update, develop and realign the specification for the NEST in Edinburgh to include No One Left Behind Phase 2 (NOLB2) provision.
- 2) To approve the specification set out in paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 of the report for the future NEST provision.
- 3) To approve that future NEST provision would consist of two elements, as set out in paragraph 4.5 of the report.
- 4) To note that recommendations for funding from the proposed NEST small grants programme would be reported to Committee following completion of the grants commissioning process.
- 5) To approve, in principle, the direct award of funding to Capital City Partnership (CCP) for the vocational training programme. The funding allocation for this would be confirmed once the NOLB2 funding allocation for Edinburgh was known.

- 6) To agree that there would be no reduction in the funding for the NEST third party grants, and only additional NOLB2 funding would be used to fund the training provision
- 7) To agree that officers would make sure there was a mechanism involved in the grants process that guaranteed that funding for the NEST third party grants would be prioritised towards organisations operating in SIMD areas 1&2 and would ensure the mechanism would deliver the best possible spread across the city from the projects and organisations that apply to the fund.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Committee of 3 June 2021 (Item 17); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

7. Fair Work Action Plan and Living Wage Edinburgh

A response was provided to the commitments made in the Council Business Plan and draft actions set out for Council leadership to promote fair work in Edinburgh. The action plan set out key commitments for the Council to implement in its role as an employer, a procurer of goods and services, a provider of business support, a provider of employability and skills support, and a convener for change in the city.

An update was also provided on work to establish an Edinburgh Living Wage Action Group and actions to achieve accreditation for Edinburgh as 'Living Wage City'. Council commitments incorporated in this work were provided for consideration.

Decision

- 1) To note the draft Fair Work Action Plan and the policy levers the Council could draw upon to further the fair work agenda in Edinburgh.
- 2) To notes that further engagement with stakeholders on the details of this plan would be carried out in alignment with consultation activities underway for the refresh of the Edinburgh Economy Strategy.
- 3) To agree that a final Fair Work Action Plan would be considered by this Committee following approval of the Edinburgh Economy Strategy in November 2021.
- 4) To note update on progress towards achieving Edinburgh's accreditation as a Living Wage City and the work carried out to date with city partners.
- 5) To agree the Council actions included in the draft Edinburgh Living Wage City Action Plan.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 25 June 2021 (Item 2); Policy and Sustainability Committee of 10 June 2021 (Item 17); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

8. 2022/23 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Consultation

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The 30-year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2022/23-2051/52 was the financial framework that underpinned the Housing Service. The plan would be reviewed annually in consultation with tenants and a five-year Capital Programme and one-year Capital Investment Budget would be ratified by the City of Edinburgh Council.

Motion

- 1) To agree to seek tenants' views on the HRA budget strategy and potential mitigations of the one-year rent freeze for inclusion in the 2022/23 HRA budget report.
 - 2) To note the potential impact on delivery of the five-year HRA capital programme of rising construction costs, materials and skills shortages and Covid safe operating practices.
 - 3) To agree to receive a report on the outcome of the consultation and the 2022-32 HRA Budget Strategy in January 2022.
- moved by Councillor Kate Campbell, seconded by Councillor Watt

Amendment

- 1) To agree to seek tenants' views on the HRA budget strategy and potential mitigations of the one-year rent freeze for inclusion in the 2022/23 HRA budget report.
 - 2) To note the potential impact on delivery of the five-year HRA capital programme of rising construction costs, materials and skills shortages and Covid safe operating practices.
 - 3) To agree to receive a report on the outcome of the consultation and the 2022-32 HRA Budget Strategy in January 2022.
 - 4) To agree that both the consultation and the subsequent 2022-32 HRA Budget Strategy Report should reflect how the quality, speed and customer service of the Council Housing Repair and Maintenance Service needed to improve to meet the reasonable demands of existing Council tenants.
 - 5) To agree that tenants should be consulted on the relative importance of upgrading the fabric of existing Council housing alongside building new Council housing funded through existing rents.
 - 6) To agree that the report should include any implications for the HRA of the Scottish Parliamentary deal between the SNP / Green Parties targeting all homes being Energy Performance Certificate C standard by 2033.
- moved by Councillor Jim Campbell, seconded by Councillor McLellan

In accordance with Standing Order 22.12, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the addendum were accepted as an amendment to the motion.

Decision

To approve the adjusted motion by Councillor Kate Campbell as follows:

- 1) To agree to seek tenants' views on the HRA budget strategy and potential mitigations of the one-year rent freeze for inclusion in the 2022/23 HRA budget report.
- 2) To note the potential impact on delivery of the five-year HRA capital programme of rising construction costs, materials and skills shortages and Covid safe operating practices.
- 3) To agree to receive a report on the outcome of the consultation and the 2022-32 HRA Budget Strategy in January 2022.
- 4) To agree that tenants should be consulted on the relative importance of upgrading the fabric of existing Council housing alongside building new Council housing funded through existing rents.
- 5) To agree that the report should include any implications for the HRA of the Scottish Parliamentary deal between the SNP / Green Parties targeting all homes being Energy Performance Certificate C standard by 2033.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 3 June 2021 (Item 10); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

9. Rent Collection and Assistance for Council Tenants

In response to a motion by Councillor Booth at the City of Edinburgh Council of 24 June 2021 on eviction action against tenants for rent arrears, information was provided on operational practice in the management of Council tenant rent arrears, tenant representative views and the legal protections and processes by which formal action to recover arrears was taken where this was required.

Decision

- 1) To note the information provided on the Council's rent collection service and the legal protections and processes for formal action to recover arrears where this was required.
- 2) To note the approach taken to provide advice and support to help tenants remain in their homes.
- 3) To note that formal debt recovery action recommenced with the Scottish Government moving Edinburgh into level 0 Covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

- 4) To note the information on the steps being taken by the Council to support tenants in the Private Rented Sector to prevent homelessness.
- 5) To agree to discharge the amended motion on the suspension of eviction action against tenants for rent arrears as approved at the City of Edinburgh Council on 24 June 2021.
- 6) To note the positive inclusion of the additional step, pre court action, of referrals to the multi-disciplinary team. To recognise that 84% of tenants referred have had positive engagement with the team.
- 7) Therefore, to ask that consideration would be given to how this team could be effectively expanded, with an emphasis on early intervention, and report back through the RRTP.
- 8) To agree to an annual Business Bulletin update on support for rent collection.
- 9) To agree to Business Bulletin updates on locality drop in events, as referenced in 4.5.2 of the report. Updates would be circulated to all elected members for information.

(References – Act of Council No. 22 of 24 June 2021; report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

10. Homelessness Services – Statutory Returns

All local authorities were required to submit a range of data, quarterly, to the Scottish Government as part of their statutory returns process. The latest publication of these returns was on 29 June 2021 and covered the period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021. Key areas of performance were highlighted and the link to the full publication provided in section 8. Comparisons with the previous years' data were provided, however it was important to note that the global pandemic may have impacted on some of these performance areas.

Decision

To note the summary of the Council's statutory homelessness returns.

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

11. Homelessness Services' Performance Dashboard

The Council's Internal Audit service recommended that Homelessness Services, in addition to providing an annual report on the service's statutory returns, should provide additional performance information to Committee.

On 3 June 2021 the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee agreed the measures to be contained in the performance dashboard. The dashboard provided performance information which was linked to the Council's Business Plan, the Poverty

Commission Delivery Plan and the delivery of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan activities. Data was provided for the first quarter of 2021/22.

Decision

- 1) To note the performance dashboard for quarter one of 2021/22 attached at Appendix 1 of the report.
- 2) To note that the next Performance Dashboard would be presented to Committee in March 2022.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 3 June 2021 (Item 16); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

12. Prevention Duty: Recommendations from the Prevention Review Group

The findings of the Prevention Review Group were published and submitted to Scottish Government on 18 February 2021. These set out recommendations to identify legal duties on local authorities and other public bodies to prevent homelessness.

An overview of the recommendations and next steps was provided.

Decision

- 1) To note recommendations of the Prevention Review Group.
- 2) To note that officers would provide further updates when more information became available.

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

13. Appointments to Working Groups 2021/22

The Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee was required to appoint the membership of its Working Groups for 2021/22. The proposed membership structures and remits of each are detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services.

Motion

- 1) To agree the remits of the working groups set out in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report.
 - 2) To appoint membership of the working groups as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report.
- moved by Councillor Kate Campbell, seconded by Councillor Watt

Amendment

- 1) To agree the remit of the working groups set out in Appendix 1 of the report.
 - 2) To appoint membership of the working groups as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.
 - 3) To agree that the Economic Advisory Panel would benefit from a plurality of views and therefore to agree to appoint a Councillor to represent every Group on Council.
- moved by Councillor McLellan, seconded by Councillor Jim Campbell

Voting

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

(For the motion – Councillors Kate Campbell, Day, Key, Lang, Rae, Staniforth, Watt and Work.

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

Decision

To approve the motion by Councillor Kate Campbell.

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

14. No One Left Behind Activity Agreement Hubs – North East and North West Edinburgh

An update was provided on the information contained in the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee Business Bulletin of 25 June 2021 on recent delivery issues and solutions put in place to ensure ongoing delivery of the No One Left Behind (NOLB) Activity Agreement (AA) Hubs for North East (excluding Leith) and North West Edinburgh.

Decision

- 1) To note the actions taken to ensure continued delivery of valuable support for vulnerable young people in North Edinburgh.
- 2) To note the award of funding to a new delivery partner in North East and North West Edinburgh.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 25 June 2021 (Item 2); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

15. Place Directorate - Revenue Monitoring 2020/21 – Provisional Out-turn and 2021/22 Month Three Position

The provisional 2020/21 out-turn revenue monitoring position was set out for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Place Directorate General Fund (GF) for services within the scope of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee. As of the time of writing, closure of the Council's accounts for 2020/21 was continuing and the report represented a provisional update. The final outturn position would be reported in due course.

Decision

- 1) To note that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) provisional out-turn position for the 2020/21 financial year was a balanced budget after a contribution of £11.103m towards the Strategic Housing Capital Investment Programme. This was an improvement of £0.505m on the approved budget and the most recent update to committee.
- 2) To note that the Place General Fund (GF) 'business as usual' revenue budget provisional out-turn position for 2020/2021 was a £0.116m overspend (excluding COVID19 impact) for services within the remit of this Committee which was in line with previous updates to the Committee.
- 3) To note that the Place GF revenue budget provisional out-turn for 2020/21 in respect of the net cost impact of COVID-19 was £2.207m for services within the remit of this Committee. This was consistent with the most recent update to Committee.
- 4) To note that the HRA 2021/22 month three forecast was a balanced position after the budgeted contribution to Strategic Housing Investment of £9.941m.
- 5) To note that the Place GF 2021/22 month three 'business as usual' forecast for services within the remit of this Committee was a £0.300m overspend in respect of emergent pressures and a forecast Covid-19 cost of £0.550m which was in line with provision made within the approved budget.

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

16. Homelessness and Housing Support - Revenue Outturn 2020/21 and Revenue Monitoring 2021/22 – month three position

The 2020/21 revenue outturn and 2021/22 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 2021, and expenditure and income projections for the remainder of the financial year.

Decision

- 1) To note an overall net residual budget pressure of £2.562m for Communities and Families at month three.
- 2) To note that this pressure included a net residual budget pressure of £1.2m for the Homelessness and Housing Support service.

(Reference – report by the Interim Executive Director of Communities and Families, submitted.)

17. Place Services Internal Audit – Actions Update

The Place Services Internal Audit Actions Update sat alongside the referral report from the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee on overdue findings which was considered on 27 April 2021. An update was provided on progress on management actions arising from Internal Audits which specifically related to services which fell within the remit of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee.

Decision

To note the progress made on the overdue Internal Audit management actions relating to the Housing Property and Homelessness services and the audit actions, which had been agreed corporately, and which services which sat within the remit of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee were working on.

(References – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee, 8 June 2021 (item 5); Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 2 September 2021 (Item 18); referral from the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee, submitted.)

18. Internal Audit Overdue Findings and Key Performance Indicators as at 27 April 2021 – 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 as at 27 April 2021, which provided an overview of the status of the overdue Internal Audit (IA) findings as at 27 April 2021 to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee for information.

Decision

To note the report by the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee.

(Reference – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee, 8 June 2021 (item 5); referral from the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee, submitted.)

19. Unsuitable Accommodation Order: Purchasing Homes

The Committee, in terms of Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, excluded the public from the meeting during consideration of the following item

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of business for the reason that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 8 of Part 1 of Schedule 7(A) of the Act.

A proposal was set out to purchase homes to address the Unsuitable Accommodation Order.

Decision

Detailed in the Confidential Schedule, signed by the Convener, with reference to this minute.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 5 November 2020 (item 24); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)