

# Notice of meeting and agenda

## Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

**10.00 am Tuesday, 14th May, 2024**

Dean of Guild Court Room - City Chambers

This is a public meeting and members of the public are welcome to attend or watch the webcast live on the Council's website.

The law allows the Council to consider some issues in private. Any items under "Private Business" will not be published, although the decisions will be recorded in the minute.

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## 1. Order of Business

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- 1.1 Including any notices of motion and any other items of business submitted as urgent for consideration at the meeting.

## 2. Declaration of Interests

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- 2.1 Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest.

## 3. Deputations

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- 3.1 If any.

## 4. Minutes

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- 4.1 Minute of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 27 February 2024 – submitted for approval as a correct record 13 - 38

## 5. Forward Planning

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- 5.1 Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee Work Programme 39 - 44
- 5.2 Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee Rolling Actions Log 45 - 106

## **6. Business Bulletin**

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<b>6.1</b>	Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee Business Bulletin	107 - 116
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## **7. Executive Decisions**

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<b>7.1</b>	No One Left Behind - ASN provision – Report by the Executive Director of Place	117 - 126
<b>7.2</b>	Employer Recruitment Incentives to Support Fair Work – Report by the Executive Director of Place	127 - 132
<b>7.3</b>	2024/25 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme – Report by the Executive Director of Place	133 - 158
<b>7.4</b>	Update: Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024/25 – 2028/29 – Report by the Executive Director of Place	159 - 168
<b>7.5</b>	Review of Missing Share Scheme and Emergency Building Safety Fees – Report by the Executive Director of Place	169 - 174

## **8. Routine Decisions**

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<b>8.1</b>	Cyclical Assurance on Service Performance – Report by the Executive Director of Place	175 - 216
<b>8.2</b>	Housing Service Improvement Plan – Six-monthly Update – Report by the Executive Director of Place	217 - 230
<b>8.3</b>	Ukraine Support Service – Grant Awards for continuation of services under Urgency Provisions for Feniks Counselling, Personal Development and Support Services Ltd and Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain (Edinburgh Branch) – Report by the Executive Director of Place	231 - 236
<b>8.4</b>	Housing (Scotland) Bill – summary and potential impacts –	237 - 248

	Report by the Executive Director of Place	
<b>8.5</b>	Discretionary Housing Payments – Report by the Executive Director of Place	249 - 258
<b>8.6</b>	Local Government Benchmarking Framework 2022/23 – Housing and Economic Development – Report by the Executive Director of Place	259 - 274
<b>8.7</b>	Internal Audit Update Report: Quarter 4 2023/24 – Referral from the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee	275 - 294

## **9. Motions**

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### **9.1** By Councillor Dobbin – Rent Rebates related to Extended Damp and Mould

“Committee:

Welcomes the progress being made by the newly formed Dampness team in addressing the backlog of severe damp and mould cases in Council properties.

Further recognises the need to take early action on newly reported cases to ensure these are addressed quickly, thereby minimising costs of repair and maintenance and in particular also avoiding the potential of physical and mental health harms to residents associated with living with damp and mould.

However, notes that there long term cases still outstanding, and that there have been cases, now resolved, that were unresolved for extended periods of time.

Believes that living in a safe, dry home should be the basic expectation of a Council tenant under their rental agreement.

And that any tenant living with damp and mould for an extended period from their reporting the problem should be subject to rent rebate if the issue is not resolved to their satisfaction within a specified period of time.

Committee therefore asks officers to:

- to prepare a report on how such a scheme would work
- Include an assessment of rebate that might be applicable to tenants who have previously had extended periods of living with damp and mould

To report back within one cycle.”

**9.2** By Councillor Dobbin – Compensation for Tenants (personal effects ruined by dampness)

“Committee:

Welcomes the progress being made by the newly formed Dampness team in addressing the backlog of severe damp and mould cases in Council properties.

Understands that extended living with damp and mould can damage or destroy personal belongings, including clothes, toys, bedding, furniture etc.

Further notes that this places additional financial hardship on families already struggling with the cost-of-living crisis.

Believes that if such damage occurs as a result of resolution of damp and mould being delayed beyond a reasonable time to repair, then tenants should be able to claim compensation.

Committee therefore asks officers to:

- Propose a compensation process that is simple to engage with and quick to provide recompense for current and new cases.
- Propose a retrospective compensation process for cases that previously were unresolved for extended periods and where the tenant has suffered significant financial loss.

Committee requests a report in two cycles.”

**9.3** By Councillor Dobbin - Property Acquisitions with Existing Tenants

“Committee:

Welcomes the progress being made whereby the Council is seeking to consolidate its ownership of flats within blocks.

Notes that opportunities arise when owner landlords seek to sell their flat to the Council, either as a result of increased mortgage costs or as a result of being unwilling to invest in the costs associated with a shared repairs project.

Further notes that typically these properties require remedial investment to bring them up to the Council letting standard.

Understands that in cases where there is an existing tenant, the Council will initiate eviction proceedings in order to gain access to the property in order to facilitate repairs and/or refurbishment.

Committee believes that as a Council, we should not be making families homeless and potentially uprooting them from their neighbours, schools etc and requests:

- that Officers prepare a report that allows a policy to be established whereby sitting tenants could be able to maintain continuity of tenure, even if this means a temporary move (decant) while work is carried out.
- that until a policy is agreed, any current evictions are put on hold or managed accordingly so that tenants are not faced with having to find a new home or risk presenting as homeless.

Committee requests a report in two cycles.”

#### **9.4** By Councillor Flannery – Council Tax Exemptions for PhD Students

“Committee recognises that:

1. There is a confusion over PhD research students’ status in assessing Council Tax (CT) exemptions.
2. That Universities should be the final arbiters to decide student status, particularly when assessing extenuating circumstances, and that Covid restrictions or ill health, are legitimate extenuating circumstance.
3. That there is a need for reassurance and investigation into

the management of Council Tax student accounts, including accuracy of bills in assessing, or making, allowances for the above, as prescribed on a case-by-case basis.

Agrees:

That it is not acceptable for multiple contradicting letters containing bills and reminder notices, showing differing amounts owed each time.

Asks:

That all officers are provided with the same information regarding student status for the purposes of assessing PhD CT exemption.

For improvement in communications with universities and students, with an agreement that extenuating circumstances deemed by the university in assessing future exemptions, should be the benchmark assessment.

Requests:

A briefing or bulletin update on any CT communications improvement on the Council Website, and integration with the Universities' recommendations in awarding extenuating circumstances."

**9.5** By Councillor Flannery - HHFW Meeting timings for 2024 – 2025

"Committee recognises that:

1. The current timings of HHFW meetings can be detrimental to efficient business, timeous reports, and decision-making, directly affecting local communities.
2. Notes that the committee will have had only two meetings since November 2023 and the Summer recess, July 2024, and Council have declared a Housing Emergency.
3. Notes that, within the approved Council Diary, the next planned HHFW HRA budget meeting, 2025, will fall after the HRA budget is submitted, which will be for two consecutive years in a row.

Therefore requests:

A review of the HHFW future meeting dates to consider those that fall around recess times, which contributes to an undue length between one meeting and the next.

To mitigate against Spring meetings, falling after the submission of the HRA Budget in February.

Asks:

For the HHFW leads to meet and discuss the potential future alignment of HHFW and HRA Budget decision-making process.”

#### **9.6** By Councillor Caldwell - Drugs in communal stairwells

“Committee recognises that:

1. Drug use continues to present a serious health issue affecting thousands of residents across Edinburgh and Council has on numerous occasions has supported measures aimed at mitigating the public health crisis, including the advocacy of Safe Consumption Rooms, needle exchanges as well as supporting policies within the Edinburgh Drug and Alcohol Partnership Strategic Plan.
2. The uncontrolled injection of drugs and discarded paraphernalia including Sharps in a common stairwells pose a health risk to both the individuals consuming the drugs and everyone accessing the stairwell.
3. Further improper disposal of Sharps (ie without a Sharps Box) into waste streams further risks the welfare of Council Waste and Cleansing officers.
4. The Council currently do not collect Sharps from common stairwells which do not have Council Housing, either as a Minority or Majority.
5. Ensuring all Edinburgh residents know about the services available for those struggling with addiction is a key component of tackling this public health crisis.

Therefore requests:

6. That Housing, Edinburgh Drug and Alcohol Partnership,



and Waste and Cleansing departments (liaising with stakeholders such as, but not limited to, Crew, LEAP and Advocard) review the policy of Sharps collection from common stairwells, and the financial and practical implication of enabling collections of Sharps reported in common stairwells without Council Housing present.

7. This includes a review of awareness and appropriate materials such as posters that tenants and residents can access, print out, and display in common stairwells to signpost individuals to help, and overall ensure stairwells remain safe spaces.
8. This is reported back to via a briefing to both Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work and Policy and Sustainability committees, and that the 'Common Stairwells Sharps Disposal Policy' is taken into account in further development of the Council's public health-based approach to tackling the drug death public health crisis."

## **Nick Smith**

Service Director, Legal and Assurance

## **Committee Members**

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Councillor Jane Meagher (Convener), Councillor Fiona Bennett, Councillor Marco Biagi, Councillor Graeme Bruce, Councillor Jack Caldwell, Councillor Stuart Dobbin, Councillor Pauline Flannery, Councillor Euan Hyslop, Councillor David Key, Councillor Ben Parker, Councillor Tim Pogson, Councillor Susan Rae, Councillor Iain Whyte and Councillor Catherine Fullerton

## **Information about the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee**

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The Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee consists of 11 Councillors and is appointed by the City of Edinburgh Council.

This meeting of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee is being held in the City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh and virtually by Microsoft Teams.

## Further information

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If you have any questions about the agenda or meeting arrangements, please contact Jamie Macrae, Committee Services, City of Edinburgh Council, Business Centre 2.1, Waverley Court, 4 East Market Street, Edinburgh EH8 8BG, Tel 0131 529 4264, email [jamie.macrae@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:jamie.macrae@edinburgh.gov.uk) / [joanna.pawlikowska@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:joanna.pawlikowska@edinburgh.gov.uk).

A copy of the agenda and papers for this meeting will be available for inspection prior to the meeting at the main reception office, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh.

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