

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Monday 20 January 2020

Present

Councillors Kate Campbell (Convener), Watt (Vice-Convener), Booth, Jim Campbell, Key, Lang, McLellan, Miller, Munro, Whyte and Work.

1. Minutes

Decision

To approve the minute of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 31 October 2019 as a correct record.

2. Work Programme

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

Decision

- 1) To agree to close the following actions:
 - Action 1(3 & 4) – Marketing Edinburgh Service Level Agreement
 - Action 4 – Private Sector Leasing Scheme - Update
 - Action 6 – Street Change Glasgow
 - Action 7 – EICC – Presentation by Marshall Dallas, Chief Executive and Les Florence, Finance and Administration, EICC

- Action 16(1) – Internal Audit – Homelessness Services
 - Action 17 – Deputation – Original Edinburgh
 - Action 18(2) – Original Edinburgh – Old Town Business Improvement District; Proposal and Ballot
- 2) To note that the following action would be transferred to the Policy and Sustainability Committee:
- Action 8 - Edinburgh Economy Strategy – Annual Progress Report
- 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 January 2020 was presented.

Decision

To note the Business Bulletin.

(Reference – Business Bulletin, submitted.)

Declaration of Interests

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

5. Support for Build to Rent

On 31 October 2019, the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee approved the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2020/25. The SHIP outlined a programme over the next five years which would deliver nearly 9,500 affordable homes across the city. A funding shortfall of £71.8 million over the next five years was highlighted, should grant levels remain static.

Following engagement with the Build to Rent (BTR) sector, a potential pipeline of around 6,000 BTR homes had been identified. This pipeline had the potential to generate investment of around £900 million in the local economy. The investment would support the delivery of Council commitments, including delivery of 20,000 affordable homes.

Decision

- 1) To note the outcome of engagement with the BTR sector and that a pipeline of over 6,000 homes had been identified to address housing demand and support the economic growth of the city.
- 2) To agree the approach to securing affordable housing in BTR developments.

- 3) To agree that the Convener would write to the Chancellor with regards to the gap in Edinburgh between the Local Housing Allowance and the 30th percentile.
- 4) To agree to refer the report to the Planning Committee for information.

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

6. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Strategy (2020-2030)

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Strategy to deliver £2.5 billion investment in building and improving Council homes was set out in order to deliver Council commitments on affordable housing and net zero carbon by 2030. Capital investment would be accompanied by improvements in how housing services were delivered to increase customer satisfaction. The strategy was aimed at reducing tenants' cost of living, with below inflation rent increases and service charges frozen for the fifth year in a row.

Decision

- 1) To note the outcome of the annual budget consultation.
- 2) To note the proposed £2.5 billion ten-year investment programme to deliver Council commitments, including 10,000 new affordable homes.
- 3) To note that the cost of achieving net zero carbon in Council housing by 2030 had been built into the business plan.
- 4) To note the risks to the delivery of the HRA budget strategy set out at paragraph 4.31 of the report and the mitigating actions.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 29 August 2019 (item 7); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

7. Tenant Participation and Community Engagement

Approval was sought for an updated Tenant Participation Strategy (TPS). Improvements made by the Edinburgh Tenants' Federation (ETF) to strengthen the service and participation role they provide were summarised, which would occur through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) currently funded until 31 March 2020, that supported the delivery of the TPS objectives.

Agreement was also sought for the ETF to be funded for a further two years from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2022, subject to ongoing review and progress against the delivery of key outputs, outcomes and improvement actions. These would be set out in the SLA and will be monitored and reviewed on a six-monthly basis.

Decision

- 1) To approve the new Tenant Participation Strategy 2020/2023.

- 2) To agree to fund the ETF for a further two years, on a maximum standstill budget of £241,083 per annum, subject to ongoing review and progress against the delivery of key outputs, outcomes and improvement actions.
- 3) To agree to circulate the annual ETF report.

(References – Housing and Economy Committee, 30 August 2018 (item 10); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

8. The EDI Group – Update Report

An update was provided on the progress of the transition strategy for the EDI Group Limited, which aimed to close the group and its subsidiary companies and bring their projects and assets into the Council.

Decision

- 1) To note the report.
- 2) To agree that an updated copy of the chart at Appendix 2 which showed the delays in the projected timeline would be circulated.
- 3) To refer the report to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee for consideration.

(References – Housing and Economy Committee, 6 June 2019 (item 8); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

Declaration of Interests

Councillors Kate Campbell and Whyte declared a non-financial interest in the above item as Directors of the EDI Group.

9. Investment in Town Centres – Strategic Statement

A proposed strategic statement for investment in town centres and local centres in Edinburgh was set out. It was proposed that a schedule of key projects setting out the priority for investment in each town and local centre would be prepared. An update on funds for investment in town centres was also provided.

Motion

- 1) To agree the strategic statement concerning investment in town centres and local centres.
- 2) To agree that the Council would prepare a schedule of key projects in town and local centres as a resource to inform future investment following the consultation process set out in the report.
- 3) To agree to discharge the motion of 6 June 2019 regarding the strategic statement.
- 4) To agree to circulate a briefing note on the criteria that classified a local centre and a town centre.

- 5) To agree that officers would engage with ward councillors within two months on the list of potential projects.

- moved by Councillor Kate Campbell, seconded by Councillor Watt

Amendment

- 1) To agree the strategic statement concerning investment in town centres and local centres, subject to the replacement of 'contribute to inclusive growth' with 'contribute to delivery of the Economic Strategy'.
- 2) To agree that the Council would prepare a schedule of key projects in town and local centres as a resource to inform future investment following the consultation process set out in the report including the option to purchase empty units when the case for purchase was sufficiently strong.
- 3) To agree to discharge the motion of 6 June 2019 regarding the strategic statement.
- 4) To agree to circulate a briefing note on the criteria that classified a local centre and a town centre.
- 5) To agree that officers would engage with ward councillors within two months on the list of potential projects.

- moved by Councillor Miller, seconded by Councillor Booth

In terms of Standing Order 21(11), the amendment was accepted as an addendum to the motion by Councillor Kate Campbell.

Decision

- 1) To agree the strategic statement concerning investment in town centres and local centres, subject to the replacement of 'contribute to inclusive growth' with 'contribute to delivery of the Economic Strategy'.
- 2) To agree that the Council would prepare a schedule of key projects in town and local centres as a resource to inform future investment following the consultation process set out in the report including the option to purchase empty units when the case for purchase was sufficiently strong.
- 3) To agree to discharge the motion of 6 June 2019 regarding the strategic statement.
- 4) To agree to circulate a briefing note on the criteria that classified a local centre and a town centre.
- 5) To agree that officers would engage with ward councillors within two months on the list of potential projects.

(References – Housing and Economy Committee, 6 June 2019 (item 12); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

10. Scottish Government funded 'No One Left Behind' Employability – Small Grants Awards

Information was provided on the small grants process to award funding to deliver early intervention employability provision for young people at risk of becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) – formerly called Activity Agreements.

Approval was sought to award small grants for a newly specified service, which met the parameters of the Scottish Government's No One Left (NOLB) Behind funding and the needs of vulnerable young people who required additional support to secure a positive destination, to begin in April 2020

Decision

- 1) To note the robust application process, including support for applicants and scoring mechanisms, for small grants to deliver Scottish Government's NOLB Strategic Skills Pipeline Stage 1 Employability Provision for young people.
- 2) To agree to approve the Review Group's recommendation to award a total of five grants (four localities plus the city centre) to commence delivery in April 2020.
- 3) To agree that the list of Place Development Efficiencies, as part of the approved savings, would be circulated.

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

11. Business Improvement Districts

The arrangements for establishing Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) were summarised. Where the Council was an eligible voter, the report made recommendations on what the process should be to exercise this responsibility.

Decision

- 1) To note the legislation in place for the creation of BIDS.
- 2) To note that the Council would also sometimes be an eligible voter in the area in which BIDs were proposed.
- 3) To note the criteria used to determine the outcome of a BID ballot.
- 4) To agree to delegate the responsibility for the Council's vote(s) to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation of the Convener and Vice Convener of Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work, the Convener and Vice Convener of Finance and Resources and the appropriate ward Councillors.
- 5) To agree to a further report on the procedure for any future ballot.

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

Declaration of Interests

Councillor Kate Campbell declared a non-financial interest in the above item as a Director of Essential Edinburgh.

12. Housing Sustainability

Across the Council's existing and new build housing estate significant investment had been made in both building homes to very high energy efficiency standard and retrofitting existing homes to improve their energy performance and help to tackle fuel poverty. Higher standards, as applied to social housing, needed to be applied across the wider domestic sector, with the right incentives in place, if carbon emissions were to fall as sharply as was required by the net zero carbon target of 2030.

Decision

- 1) To note that the domestic sector was responsible for around 35% of overall emissions with Council housing responsible for less than 2% of emissions.
- 2) To note that the significant investment in improving the energy efficiency of existing Council homes, coupled with the decarbonisation of the grid, had resulted in a 65% reduction in carbon emissions since 2005.
- 3) To note the approach to achieving net zero carbon in Council Homes and that progress would be reported as part of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan.
- 4) To note the range of innovative energy programmes and projects underway to reduce emissions across the city, tackle fuel poverty and overcome mixed tenure ownership barriers.
- 5) To agree to refer the report to Policy and Sustainability Committee on 25 February 2020.

(References – Housing and Economy Committee, 6 June 2019 (items 6 and 10); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

13. Sustainability – Carbon Neutral Economy

On 25 October 2019 the Policy and Sustainability Committee agreed to set a target of 2030 for achieving net zero carbon for the city of Edinburgh.

Supporting Edinburgh's transition to a low carbon economy had been identified as a good growth step in the Economy Strategy. There was now increased emphasis on this objective and on ensuring that the other good growth steps were delivered in a way that is compatible with the net zero target. However, it was important that the economic and social outcomes of Economy Strategy were not lost but instead achieved as part of a move to a carbon neutral economy.

Motion

- 1) To note the programme of work currently underway to deliver sustainability improvements.
 - 2) To agree the new priorities identified at the Member/Officer Workshop on 27 November 2019 and to note that these would be further developed.
 - 3) To agree that progress against the sustainability objective should be set out within the Economy Strategy Annual Update reports.
- moved by Councillor Kate Campbell, seconded by Councillor Watt

Amendment

- 1) To note the programme of work currently underway to deliver sustainability improvements.
 - 2) To agree the new priorities identified at the Member/Officer Workshop on 27 November 2019 and to note that these would be further developed including:
 - Strengthening the priorities to 'net zero' in place of 'low' carbon where solutions existed to enable net zero carbon to be achieved.
 - Identifying any additional emerging priorities to be included as the plans proceed.
 - Ensuring that associated and indirect carbon impacts were taken into account.
 - Identifying economic priorities/opportunities for carbon capture, in order to align with the council target of net zero rather than absolute zero carbon.
 - 3) To agree that progress against the sustainability objective should be set out within the Economy Strategy Annual Update reports.
- moved by Councillor Miller, seconded by Councillor Booth

In terms of Standing Order 21(11), the amendment was accepted as an addendum to the motion by Councillor Kate Campbell.

Decision

- 1) To note the programme of work currently underway to deliver sustainability improvements.
- 2) To agree the new priorities identified at the Member/Officer Workshop on 27 November 2019 and to note that these would be further developed including:
 - Strengthening the priorities to 'net zero' in place of 'low' carbon where solutions existed to enable net zero carbon to be achieved.
 - Identifying any additional emerging priorities to be included as the plans proceed.
 - Ensuring that associated and indirect carbon impacts were taken into account.
 - Identifying economic priorities/opportunities for carbon capture, in order to align with the council target of net zero rather than absolute zero carbon.

- 3) To agree that progress against the sustainability objective should be set out within the Economy Strategy Annual Update reports.

(References – Policy and Sustainability Committee 25 October 2019 (item 1); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

14. Consultation on the Replacement of European Structural Funds in Scotland Post EU-Exit

Decision

To note that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

15. Advice Services Accreditation

An update was provided on the Council's Advice Services preparation for being accredited against The Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers. Assessment for accreditation through audit functions were provided by the Scottish Legal Aid Board (SLAB).

Decision

- 1) To note the Council's request to be accredited to The Scottish National Standards for Information and Advice Providers.
- 2) To agree that a briefing note would be circulated on the timeline for the SLAB audit once the timeline was available.

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

Declaration of Interests

Councillor Lang declared a financial interest in the above item as an employee of the Edinburgh Law Society of Scotland, left the room and took no part in the discussion.

16. Marketing Edinburgh Update

An update was provided on Marketing Edinburgh, following the resignation of the Board in early November 2019 and the subsequent appointment of Councillors Kate Campbell, Claire Miller and Mandy Watt to the Board. Details were provided of the service activities carried out by Marketing Edinburgh, the recent move to co-locate with Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce in the George Street offices and the Board's efforts to consider sustainable financial solutions for the priority areas of film and convention.

Decision

To note the report.

(References – Housing and Economy Committee, 6 June 2019 (item 11); Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 31 October 2019 (item 16); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

Declaration of Interests

Councillors Kate Campbell, Miller and Watt declared a non-financial interest in the above item as Directors of Marketing Edinburgh.

17. Housing Service Improvement Plan: Update

An update was provided on the work being taken forward as part of the Housing Service Improvement Plan (HSIP). The measures set out in the improvement plan aimed to significantly improve customer satisfaction, operating performance and reduce costs.

Decision

- 1) To note progress made with the HSIP and that the programme was projected to exceed the first-year savings target.
- 2) To agree to receive an update report in six months.
- 3) To agree to provide more detailed metrics in the next report in six months' time.

(References – Housing and Economy Committee, 6 June 2019 (item 10); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

18. Place Directorate – Revenue Monitoring 2019/20 – Half Year Report

The projected month six revenue monitoring position for the Place Directorate Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Fund (GF) elements was set out, based on analysis of actual expenditure and income to the end of September 2019, and projections for the remainder of the financial year.

Decision

- 1) To note the balanced budget forecast position in respect of the HRA revenue budget.
- 2) To note that the Place Directorate GF was currently projecting a potential budget pressure of £5.615m for 2019/20.
- 3) To note that the Executive Director of Place was continuing to progress implementation of measures to reduce the potential budget pressures with £3.518m of planned measures identified to be implemented before the financial year end. These would reduce the general fund budget pressure to £2.097m. Further measures were being identified to mitigate the potential budget pressure if possible.

- 4) To note that progress would be reported to the Finance and Resources Committee on 23 January 2020 and to the meeting of this committee on 19 March 2020.

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

19. Homelessness and Housing Support - Revenue Monitoring 2019/20 – 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 2019, and expenditure and income projections for the remainder of the financial year.

Decision

- 1) To note an overall net residual budget pressure of £4.5m for Communities and Families, as reported to the Education, Children and Families Committee.
- 2) To note that this pressure included a net residual budget pressure of £0.8m for the Homelessness and Housing Support service, which remained at month seven.
- 3) To note that approved savings and operational efficiencies in 2019/20 totalled £0.295m, with £0.175m on track to be delivered in full and £0.120m assessed as amber, which was not expected to be fully delivered until 2020/21.
- 4) To note that the Executive Director of Communities and Families was taking measures to reduce budget pressures and that progress would be reported to the Finance and Resources Committee on 23 January 2020.

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

20. Rapid Access Accommodation and Link Working

An update was provided on the delivery of rapid access accommodation for rough sleepers and the development of the link worker role.

Decision

- 1) To note the update on the delivery of rapid access accommodation and the development on the link worker role.
- 2) To note that case studies were being developed by the service area and would be circulated to members on completion.

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