

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 27 February 2024

Present

Councillors Meagher (Convener), Bruce, Caldwell, Dobbin, Flannery, Hyslop, Key, Mumford (substituting for Councillor Rae) (items 6-23), Parker, Pogson, Rae (items 1-5) and Whyte.

1. Deputations

Living Rent Edinburgh, in relation to Item 7.7 – Responding to the Housing Emergency Declaration

Living Rent welcomed the Action Plan and was glad to see that steps were being taken to reduce number of void properties. The deputation expressed concern that the actions weren't enough and stated that the action plan would need to go further to truly change the landscape of housing across the city. The action plan highlighted that temporary accommodation and homelessness were the main drivers for the emergency, but the recommendations focused on increasing the number of PSL properties. They stated that private sector leasing was expensive and could provide low quality accommodation. The solution to the housing emergency should not come from the private sector, but from building high-quality social housing. There were 7,000 empty properties in Edinburgh and the deputation said that these properties should be turned into housing stock. Another key priority should be retrofitting, which was not only a climate measure, but a key measure in increasing affordability due to rising fuel costs. Living Rent had repeatedly warned the Scottish government that removing the rent cap would be a disaster for tenants and local authorities. They argued that the plan would need actions to support private tenants to avoid unfair rent increases, evictions and an increase in homelessness presentations.

A [written submission](#) was also provided.

(See Item 13 below)

2. Minutes

Decision

To approve the minute of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 5 December 2023 as a correct record.

3. Work Programme

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

Decision

To note the work programme.

(Reference – Work Programme, submitted.)

4. Rolling Actions Log

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

Decision

1) To agree to close the following actions:

- Action 2 - Response to motion by Councillor Dalgleish – Energy Efficiency Task Force
- Action 3 (2) - Gig Economy Task Force – progress update
- Action 4 - Business Bulletin
- Action 6 (4) - Capital Funding Opportunities for Council Housing
- Action 7 (1 and 3) - Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan – Annual Update on Progress
- Action 10 (1) - Motion by Councillor Caldwell – Geographic spread of Council Housing in SHIP, Acquisitions & Disposals
- Action 11 - City of Edinburgh Council Motion by Councillor Mattos-Coelho – Employment Support for Refugees
- Action 12 - City of Edinburgh Council - Annual Performance Report 2022/23 - referral from the Policy and Sustainability Committee
- Action 14 - Damp, mould and condensation in Council homes update
- Action 15 - Capital City Partnership: Progress Update
- Action 16 - Housing Service Improvement Plan – Six-monthly Update
- Action 17 (2) - By Councillor Flannery - Student Homelessness Response
- Action 18 (3) - By Councillor Parker – Temporary accommodation for asylum seekers and 'hotel maximisation' policy change
- Action 20 - Business Bulletin
- Action 21 - UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update
- Action 23 (1 and 4) - Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2024-29
- Action 24 (1,4 and 6) - Housing Emergency Action Plan

- 2) To agree to update the following actions:
 - Action 17 – to request an update on the request to the Scottish Government to publish the PBSA Findings Review, as agreed by committee in October 2023.
- 3) To otherwise note the remaining outstanding actions.

(Reference – Rolling Actions Log, submitted.)

5. Business Bulletin

The Business Bulletin was presented.

Decision

- 1) To note the Business Bulletin.
- 2) To note that officers would confirm by email when the Tenant Participation Strategy would be coming to committee.
- 3) To request that forthcoming reports on Acquisitions and Disposals should include a breakdown by wards.

(Reference – Business Bulletin, submitted.)

6. Capital City Partnership Service Level Agreement

The Council's current Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Capital City Partnership (CCP) was due to expire on 31 March 2024. Approval was sought to conclude an updated SLA for a period of three years, with the ability to extend for a further three one-year periods, up to a maximum of six years in total.

Motion

- 1) To agree the updated Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Capital City Partnership (CCP), as summarised in Appendix 1.
- 2) To agree that the SLA will be effective for three years from 1 April 2024, with the option to extend for a further three years (one year at a time) up to a maximum of six years in total. This will be subject to performance and the outcome of the Council budget setting process each year.

- moved by Councillor Meagher, seconded by Councillor Pogson

Amendment 1

- 1) To agree the updated Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Capital City Partnership (CCP), as summarised in Appendix 1, subject to a revision of KPI 2e to specify that the number of clients supported into Real Living Wage jobs should be 100%, not 80%.
- 2) To agree that the SLA will be effective for three years from 1 April 2024, with the option to extend for a further three years (one year at a time) up to a maximum of six years in total. This will be subject to performance and the outcome of the Council budget setting process each year.

- moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Mumford

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendment 1 was accepted as an amendment to the motion.

At this point in the meeting the following Amendment 2 was proposed:

Amendment 2

To agree the original motion as proposed by Councillor Meagher.

- moved by Councillor Whyte, seconded by Councillor Bruce

Voting

The voting was as follows:

For the Motion (as adjusted) - 9 votes

For Amendment 2 - 2 votes

(For the Motion (as adjusted): Councillors Caldwell, Dobbin, Flannery, Hyslop, Key, Meagher, Mumford, Parker, and Pogson.

For Amendment 2: Councillors Bruce and Whyte)

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Meagher:

- 1) To agree the updated Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Capital City Partnership (CCP), as summarised in Appendix 1 of the report by the Executive Director of Place, subject to a revision of KPI 2e to specify that the number of clients supported into Real Living Wage jobs should be 100%, not 80%.
- 2) To agree that the SLA would be effective for three years from 1 April 2024, with the option to extend for a further three years (one year at a time) up to a maximum of six years in total. This would be subject to performance and the outcome of the Council budget setting process each year.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 3 October 2023 (item 7); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

7. UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update

Details were provided on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, in response to Committee's request to reallocate funds previously earmarked for delivering projects aligned with the Regional Prosperity Fund (RPF), along with recommendations of projects to fund.

Decision

To agree the recommendations, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2, for the reallocation of UK Shared Prosperity funds from Regional Prosperity Framework delivery.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 4 August 2022 (item 6); 8 August 2023 (item 9); and 5 December 2023 (item 8); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

8. Affordable Childcare for Working Parents

Details were provided of the review of the Affordable Childcare for Working Parents service and a recommendation for the future delivery of the service was presented.

Decision

- 1) To agree a revised approach to the Affordable Childcare for Working Parents service, including:

- the procurement of contracts in each locality to support the delivery of subsidised childcare in areas of highest deprivation for children aged 0-12 years; and
 - The direct award of four grants to the currently contracted childcare providers to minimise the risk of business failure and a consequential loss of childcare provision in these four areas; and
- 2) To note the planned extension of the current four contracts up to the end of July 2024 to allow for the procurement/grant process to be completed and for the new contracts to fall in line with the academic year.
 - 3) To request a cross-committee briefing session, including members of this committee, Education, Children and Families, and the Edinburgh Partnership, on the proposed future business model for this service.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 1 December 2022 (item 10) and 8 August 2023 (item 9); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

9. Parental Employability Support

An update was provided on the Parental Employability Support (PES) activity in Edinburgh during 2023/24. Approval was sought to continue to fund grants in 2024/25, based on the review of demand for services, subject to funding being offered by the Scottish Government.

Decision

- 1) To note the impact of Parental Employability Support (PES) in 2023/24 so far.
- 2) To note the continued demand for PES delivery in 2024/25.
- 3) To agree the recommended expenditure of PES funding, subject to the Scottish Government Grant Offer.

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

10. The City of Edinburgh Council – Apprenticeship Programme

Details were provided of the work undertaken to deliver an effective apprenticeship programme within the Council and the actions taken to mitigate underperformance as outlined in the Annual Performance Report 2022/23.

Decision

- 1) To note the continuous improvements to the delivery of the Council's Modern Apprenticeship Programme since the Annual Performance Report 2022/23.
- 2) To note the expectation of the 2024/25 Apprenticeship Contract Award from Skills Development Scotland, with an anticipated 54 new apprentices within the Council in 2024/25.
- 3) To note the ongoing plans to raise the profile of apprenticeships across the Council in 2024/25 to maximise apprenticeship opportunities.

(References – Act of Council No. 10 of 28 September 2023; report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

11. Increasing Affordable Homes Delivery

An update was provided on the delivery of affordable housing. The amount of grant funding available per home had been increased by the Scottish Government but the national budget for delivering affordable homes had reduced by over 35% in the last two years. Edinburgh's forward budget was not projected to increase from the current level of £45 million, which would be only sufficient to deliver around 500 affordable homes each year.

Motion

- 1) To note the ongoing challenges to the delivery of new affordable homes in the city including the increasing cost of construction, borrowing and delivery of services to existing tenants at a time when rents have been frozen or have been increased less than overall inflation, as well as inadequate amounts of grant funding.
- 2) To agree to discharge the action from the Council on 14 December 2023 to provide an update report at the next Housing Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on the deliverability of the target to increase the supply of affordable housing to reach 25,000 affordable homes.

- moved by Councillor Meagher, seconded by Councillor Pogson

Amendment

- 1) To note the ongoing challenges to the delivery of new affordable homes in the city including the increasing cost of construction, borrowing and delivery of services to existing tenants at a time when rents have been frozen or have been increased less than overall inflation, as well as inadequate amounts of grant funding.
- 2) To recognise that, given these challenges - and in addition to a need for increased grant funding from the Scottish Government - a new approach to financing social housing might be required.
- 3) To note that, following a request from Committee in October 2023, a briefing note was circulated to Councillors explaining options for supplementing the HRA with funds from the General Fund, and notes that 3 of the 6 budgets submitted to the Full Council meeting on 22nd February 2024 included proposals to do this in order to bring void properties back into use.
- 4) To note that the ability to transfer funds into the HRA from the General Fund requires approval from the Scottish Government, and that in late 2023 / early 2024, the Scottish Government had indicated that, for this consent to be given, a number of questions would need to be answered by the Council, including about the purpose of the transfer, public consultation plans for the proposal, resources involved (in both the General Fund and HRA), and details about what alternative funding options had already been considered.
- 5) To request that officers further engage with Scottish Government officials to explore the questions raised in 4) and identify the parameters around when approval for the transfer of funds would and would not be given (with particular

focus on what purposes would be permissible for this, e.g. to bring voids back into use, to retrofit homes, etc), reporting back to committee in 2 cycles to allow political groups adequate time to build this into their budget plans for 2025-2026.

- 6) To agree to discharge the action from the Council on 14 December 2023 to provide an update report at the next Housing Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on the deliverability of the target to increase the supply of affordable housing to reach 25,000 affordable homes.

- moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Mumford

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendment 1 was accepted as an addendum to the motion.

At this point in the meeting the following Amendment 2 was proposed:

Amendment 2

To agree the original motion as proposed by Councillor Meagher.

- moved by Councillor Whyte, seconded by Councillor Bruce

Voting

The voting was as follows:

For the Motion (as adjusted) - 7 votes

For Amendment 2 - 4 votes

(For the Motion (as adjusted): Councillors Dobbin, Hyslop, Key, Meagher, Mumford, Parker, and Pogson.

For Amendment 2: Councillors Bruce, Caldwell, Flannery and Whyte.)

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Meagher:

- 1) To note the ongoing challenges to the delivery of new affordable homes in the city including the increasing cost of construction, borrowing and delivery of services to existing tenants at a time when rents had been frozen or had been increased less than overall inflation, as well as inadequate amounts of grant funding.
- 2) To recognise that, given these challenges - and in addition to a need for increased grant funding from the Scottish Government - a new approach to financing social housing might be required.
- 3) To note that, following a request from Committee in October 2023, a briefing note was circulated to Councillors explaining options for supplementing the HRA with funds from the General Fund, and note that 3 of the 6 budgets submitted to the Full Council meeting on 22nd February 2024 included proposals to do this in order to bring void properties back into use.
- 4) To note that the ability to transfer funds into the HRA from the General Fund required approval from the Scottish Government, and that in late 2023 / early 2024, the Scottish Government had indicated that, for this consent to be given, a

number of questions would need to be answered by the Council, including about the purpose of the transfer, public consultation plans for the proposal, resources involved (in both the General Fund and HRA), and details about what alternative funding options had already been considered.

- 5) To request that officers further engage with Scottish Government officials to explore the questions raised in 4) and identify the parameters around when approval for the transfer of funds would and would not be given (with particular focus on what purposes would be permissible for this, e.g. to bring voids back into use, to retrofit homes, etc), reporting back to committee in 2 cycles to allow political groups adequate time to build this into their budget plans for 2025-2026.
- 6) To agree to discharge the action from the Council on 14 December 2023 to provide an update report at the next Housing Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on the deliverability of the target to increase the supply of affordable housing to reach 25,000 affordable homes.

(References – Act of Council No. 7 of 15 December 2022 and No. 12 of 14 December 2023; report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

12. Cyclical assurance on service performance

A proposal was considered for the introduction of a cyclical performance report on key performance indicators to allow more effective performance and progress reporting to Committee, enabling a more appropriate level of oversight and assurance over how the Housing and Homelessness service was operating. Key indicators proposed for this new assurance model would include homelessness; void properties; rental income; new build completion, antisocial behaviour and whole house retrofit. To support this, a deliberate approach would be taken to develop the data and service improvement culture within the Housing and Homelessness service.

Motion

- 1) To agree to receive a cyclical performance report on housing and homelessness performance.
- 2) To note that this report will contain key indicators representing a range of services delivered across the Housing and Homelessness services, as outlined in paragraph 4.2.
- 3) To note that on a cyclical basis a drill down will be presented on a specific data set.
- 4) To note the work being undertaken on improving the data literacy, service improvement and prevention culture within the Housing and Homelessness Service.

- moved by Councillor Meagher, seconded by Councillor Pogson

Amendment 1

- 1) To agree to receive a cyclical performance report on housing and homelessness performance.

- 2) To note that this report will contain key indicators representing a range of services delivered across the Housing and Homelessness services, as outlined in paragraph 4.2, with the addition of reporting of an additional dataset focused on delivery, management and maintenance of accessible homes and support for disabled people within the Housing and Homelessness service.
- 3) To note that on a cyclical basis a drill down will be presented on a specific data set.
- 4) To note the work being undertaken on improving the data literacy, service improvement and prevention culture within the Housing and Homelessness Service.

- moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Mumford

Amendment 2

- 1) To agree to receive a cyclical performance report on housing and homelessness performance.
- 2) To note that this report will contain key indicators representing a range of services delivered across the Housing and Homelessness services, as outlined in paragraph 4.2.
- 3) To note that on a cyclical basis a drill down will be presented on a specific data set.
- 4) To note the work being undertaken on improving the data literacy, service improvement and prevention culture within the Housing and Homelessness Service.
- 5) To note that the Council having declared a Housing Emergency, urgent action to address the emergency is essential.
- 6) To note that Bringing Voids back into service represents an opportunity that sits directly within the Council's control.
- 7) To recognise that not all Voids are suitable or available to return for letting.
- 8) To request the status of Voids be reported in the Business Bulletin in each cycle:
 - voids returned to stock for letting.
 - new voids added during period.
 - balance of voids for re-letting.
 - breakdown of voids unable to be let.
- 9) To welcome the establishment of the dedicated Damp and Mould Team approved at the May 2023 committee meeting.
- 10) To note that while Edinburgh has declared a Housing Emergency in order to address the extreme shortage of accommodation in the City, it also recognises that all accommodation offered by the Council should be free from damp and mould and be a safe, secure living environment.

- 7) To request reporting in each Business Bulletin on progress made to eradicate Damp and Mould as a factor impacting the lives of Council tenants and their families, in line with the approved tenant engagement process and reporting to include:
- Number of homes by Ward reported as having damp and mould at date of report
 - Average waiting time for a dampness survey
 - Number of homes by Ward having been cleared of Damp and Mould since formation of the Dedicated Team (first report) / since last report (ongoing)
 - as recorded by the Damp and Mould Team
 - as confirmed by Tenant sign off
 - New Damp and Mould Cases reported since date of last report by Ward.
- moved by Councillor Dobbin, seconded by Councillor Key

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendments 1 and 2 were accepted as addendums to the Motion.

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Meagher:

- 1) To agree to receive a cyclical performance report on housing and homelessness performance.
- 2) To note that this report would contain key indicators representing a range of services delivered across the Housing and Homelessness services, as outlined in paragraph 4.2 of the report by the Executive Director of Place, with the addition of reporting of an additional dataset focused on delivery, management and maintenance of accessible homes and support for disabled people within the Housing and Homelessness service.
- 3) To note that on a cyclical basis a drill down would be presented on a specific dataset.
- 4) To note the work being undertaken on improving the data literacy, service improvement and prevention culture within the Housing and Homelessness Service.
- 5) To note that the Council having declared a Housing Emergency, urgent action to address the emergency was essential.
- 6) To note that bringing voids back into service represented an opportunity that sat directly within the Council's control.
- 7) To recognise that not all voids were suitable or available to return for letting.
- 8) To request the status of voids be reported in the Business Bulletin in each cycle:
 - voids returned to stock for letting.
 - new voids added during period.
 - balance of voids for re-letting.

- breakdown of voids unable to be let.
- 9) To welcome the establishment of the dedicated Damp and Mould Team approved at the May 2023 committee meeting.
 - 10) To note that while Edinburgh had declared a Housing Emergency in order to address the extreme shortage of accommodation in the City, it also recognised that all accommodation offered by the Council should be free from damp and mould and be a safe, secure living environment.
 - 11) To request reporting in each Business Bulletin on progress made to eradicate Damp and Mould as a factor impacting the lives of Council tenants and their families, in line with the approved tenant engagement process and reporting to include:
 - Number of homes by Ward reported as having damp and mould at date of report.
 - Average waiting time for a dampness survey.
 - Number of homes by Ward having been cleared of Damp and Mould since formation of the Dedicated Team (first report) / since last report (ongoing)
 - as recorded by the Damp and Mould Team
 - as confirmed by Tenant sign off.
 - New Damp and Mould Cases reported since date of last report by Ward.

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

13. Responding to the Housing Emergency Declaration

On 2 November 2023, the City of Edinburgh Council declared a Housing Emergency. On 5 December 2023, the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee approved a report that contained key actions deemed necessary to respond to the housing emergency. In approving this report, the Committee agreed that further work was required to engage with stakeholders to ensure the final action plan was wide reaching and tackled all identified concerns about and barriers to housing. Following the meeting on 5 December 2023, 14 workshops and briefings had been undertaken with stakeholders across various sectors and professions to gauge views on the actions and priorities needed to respond to the housing emergency. An Action Plan was submitted, which identified proposed actions that had resulted from those workshops.

Motion

- 1) To note the stakeholders involved in the development of this plan.
 - 2) To approve the actions identified in seeking to resolve the housing emergency.
 - 3) To note the project register and associated programme tracking and monitoring documentation.
 - 4) To agree to cyclical exception reporting on progress in delivering the action plan.
- moved by Councillor Meagher, seconded by Councillor Pogson

Amendment 1

- 1) To note the stakeholders involved in the development of this plan (Appendix 2).

- 2) To approve the actions identified in seeking to resolve the housing emergency.
- 3) To note the project register and associated programme tracking and monitoring documentation.
- 4) To agree to cyclical exception reporting on progress in delivering the action plan.
- 5) To note from the Internal Audit Ad Hoc Repairs, points -
 - 2.4.9 To agree that this report will set out the reasons why there has been a failure of contract management and what specific actions are being taken in those service areas to bring contract management back in line.
 - 2.4.14 To note a significant lack of processes and procedures to manage internal and contractor performance, check the quality of repairs, manage stock, approve invoices above the tolerance threshold or check completion of works; and that the lack of process puts the HRA at considerable risk and,
 - 2.4.15 To agree that the Repairs Right First Time audit, alongside the previous audit on Mixed Tenure Repairs and the audit on Damp and Mould are referred to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work committee with a recommendation that monitoring of the audit management actions are included in the Housing Service Improvement Plan to monitor and secure best value for the HRA and improve services for tenants.
- 6) To request that these interventions are incorporated into the Housing Emergency Plan and Strategy, and that future references from this audit are cross-referenced to avoid duplication, but highlight action.

- moved by Councillor Flannery, seconded by Councillor Caldwell

Amendment 2

- 1) To note the stakeholders involved in the development of this plan.
- 2) To approve the actions identified in seeking to resolve the housing emergency.
- 3) To note the project register and associated programme tracking and monitoring documentation.
- 4) To agree to cyclical exception reporting on progress in delivering the action plan.
- 5) To welcome the work completed on the Action Plan to date, including the multiple workshops with different stakeholders to develop the plan.
- 6) To note that, to date, these workshops have taken place in discrete sessions and not allowed for the “cross-pollination” of ideas between service areas, stakeholders and representative groups.
- 7) Therefore, to agree that, as part of the next stage of work with the Housing Emergency plan, consideration is given to hosting a Housing Emergency summit to discuss the plan with all stakeholders, with a particular focus on exploring what outcomes are expected to be achieved in relation to the various different actions contained in the plan to date.

- 8) To agree that some consideration will be given to how members of the public can contribute their ideas / views about the plan in advance of this summit, with their ideas to be discussed during the summit too.
- 9) To note a lack of detail in the plan concerning support available for tenants in the private rental sector, despite this comprising a significant percentage of the city's housing stock and exorbitant rents putting tenants at risk of falling into rent arrears and homelessness, increasing pressures on the homelessness service.
- 10) To agree that additional actions will be added into the plan to look at how the Council can support private tenants as a preventative spend / action against homelessness – for example, by exploring options for reinstating the Tenant Grant Fund – and that these additions will be reported at the next Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee.

- moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Mumford

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendments 1 and 2 were accepted as addendums to the motion.

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Meagher:

- 1) To note the stakeholders involved in the development of this plan.
- 2) To approve the actions identified in seeking to resolve the housing emergency.
- 3) To note the project register and associated programme tracking and monitoring documentation.
- 4) To agree to cyclical exception reporting on progress in delivering the action plan.
- 5) To note from the Internal Audit Ad Hoc Repairs, points -
 - 2.4.9 To agree that this report will set out the reasons why there has been a failure of contract management and what specific actions are being taken in those service areas to bring contract management back in line.
 - 2.4.14 To note a significant lack of processes and procedures to manage internal and contractor performance, check the quality of repairs, manage stock, approve invoices above the tolerance threshold or check completion of works; and that the lack of process puts the HRA at considerable risk and,
 - 2.4.15 To agree that the Repairs Right First Time audit, alongside the previous audit on Mixed Tenure Repairs and the audit on Damp and Mould are referred to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work committee with a recommendation that monitoring of the audit management actions are included in the Housing Service Improvement Plan to monitor and secure best value for the HRA and improve services for tenants.
- 6) To request that these interventions be incorporated into the Housing Emergency Plan and Strategy, and that future references from this audit be cross-referenced to avoid duplication, but highlight action.

- 7) To welcome the work completed on the Action Plan to date, including the multiple workshops with different stakeholders to develop the plan.
- 8) To note that, to date, these workshops had taken place in discrete sessions and not allowed for the “cross-pollination” of ideas between service areas, stakeholders and representative groups.
- 9) To agree that, as part of the next stage of work with the Housing Emergency plan, consideration be given to hosting a Housing Emergency summit to discuss the plan with all stakeholders, with a particular focus on exploring what outcomes were expected to be achieved in relation to the various different actions contained in the plan to date.
- 10) To agree that some consideration would be given to how members of the public could contribute their ideas / views about the plan in advance of this summit, with their ideas to be discussed during the summit too.
- 11) To note a lack of detail in the plan concerning support available for tenants in the private rental sector, despite this comprising a significant percentage of the city’s housing stock and exorbitant rents putting tenants at risk of falling into rent arrears and homelessness, increasing pressures on the homelessness service.
- 12) To agree that additional actions would be added into the plan to look at how the Council could support private tenants as a preventative spend / action against homelessness – for example, by exploring options for reinstating the Tenant Grant Fund – and that these additions would be reported at the next Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee.

- moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Mumford

(References – Act of Council No. 14 of 2 November 2023; Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 5 December 2023 (item 12); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

14. Support for Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Displaced People

Details were provided of the support provided to refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people in Edinburgh, in response to the motion ‘Employment Support for Refugees’ as agreed at Council on 31 August 2023.

Motion

- 1) To note the range of support provided to refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people.
- 2) To note Edinburgh’s existing commitment to resettling up to one hundred and fifty people per year under UK Government resettlement programmes subject to the availability of appropriate accommodation.

- moved by Councillor Meagher, seconded by Councillor Pogson

Amendment 1

- 1) To note the range of support provided to refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people.

- 2) To note Edinburgh's existing commitment to resettling up to one hundred and fifty people per year under UK Government resettlement programmes subject to the availability of appropriate accommodation.
- 3) To note that 24th February 2024 marked two years that have passed since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and that Edinburgh remains committed to being a welcoming city for everyone around the world fleeing persecution and where we can, will continue to work with Scottish and UK Governments, the third sector, relevant agencies, and residents, to offer constructive support to those escaping oppression. To further note the Lord Provost and civic leaders continue to show solidarity with Ukraine and the Council continues to work with Governments for schemes to fund homes and other provision for refugees in addition to the work outlined in this report.
- 4) To note concern about the Home Office announcement on February 19th regarding the restrictions to family visas for Ukrainians ('Ukraine Family Scheme'), particularly on behalf of the of the Ukrainian community who have either settled or are residing in Edinburgh, but welcomes the 18-month visa extensions.
- 5) To request the Convener liaise with the Council Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs highlighting the success of the Welcome Hub since February 2022 and outlining the Council's opposition to the new restriction, requesting a recommencement of the Ukraine Family Scheme.

- moved by Councillor Caldwell, seconded by Councillor Flannery

Amendment 2

- 1) To note the range of support provided to refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people.
- 2) To note Edinburgh's existing commitment to resettling up to one hundred and fifty people per year under UK Government resettlement programmes subject to the availability of appropriate accommodation.
- 3) To agree to receive a twice-yearly update on progress towards the development of the "Edinburgh strategy for support to asylum seekers, refugees and displaced people" outlined in section 9.4 of the report, including updates on service level demand and any other relevant information for committee in the form of a report to Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee.

- moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Mumford

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendments 1 and 2 were accepted as addendums to the motion.

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Meagher:

- 1) To note the range of support provided to refugees, asylum seekers and displaced people.
- 2) To note Edinburgh's existing commitment to resettling up to one hundred and fifty people per year under UK Government resettlement programmes subject to the availability of appropriate accommodation.
- 3) To note that 24th February 2024 marked two years since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and that Edinburgh remained committed to being a welcoming city for everyone around the world fleeing persecution and where we could, would continue to work with Scottish and UK Governments, the third sector, relevant agencies, and residents, to offer constructive support to those escaping oppression. To further note the Lord Provost and civic leaders would continue to show solidarity with Ukraine and the Council would continue to work with Governments for schemes to fund homes and other provision for refugees in addition to the work outlined in this report.
- 4) To note concern about the Home Office announcement on February 19th regarding the restrictions to family visas for Ukrainians ('Ukraine Family Scheme'), particularly on behalf of the of the Ukrainian community who had either settled or were residing in Edinburgh, but to welcome the 18-month visa extensions.
- 5) To request the Convener liaise with the Council Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs highlighting the success of the Welcome Hub since February 2022 and outline the Council's opposition to the new restriction, requesting a recommencement of the Ukraine Family Scheme.
- 6) To agree to receive a twice-yearly update on progress towards the development of the "Edinburgh strategy for support to asylum seekers, refugees and displaced people" outlined in section 9.4 of the report by the Executive Director of Children, Education and Justice Services, including updates on service level demand and any other relevant information for committee in the form of a report to Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee.

(References – Act of Council No. 22 of 31 August 2023; report by the Executive Director of Children, Education and Justice Services, submitted.)

Declaration of interests

Councillor Parker made a transparency statement in respect of the above item as a trustee of Edinburgh Garden Partners.

15. Housing and Homelessness and Business Growth and Inclusion: Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023/24 – Month Eight position

A summary was provided of the 2023/24 month eight revenue forecast for Housing and Homelessness, Business Growth and Inclusion and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2023/24.

Decision

- 1) To note the Place service area, which includes, Housing and Homelessness, Culture and Wellbeing, Sustainable Development and Operational Services, was forecasting a pressure of £2.60m, as at month eight, which was an increase of £1.89m from the £0.71m forecast at month five.
- 2) To note Housing and Homelessness was forecasting a budget pressure, as at month eight, of £2.7m which was an increase of £1.6m from the £1.10m forecast at month five.
- 3) To note Business Growth and Inclusion was forecasting an underspend, as at month eight, of £0.46m which was unchanged from the forecast at month five.
- 4) To note the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was forecasting a breakeven position for 2023/24. The forecast had deteriorated by £2.724m since the position reported at month five. In total, this was a £6.978m shortfall against the budgeted contribution to the Strategic Housing Investment Fund (SHIF).
- 5) To note plans for full mitigation of Directorate overspends would be developed before the beginning of the 2024/25 financial year.
- 6) To note the ongoing risks to the achievement of a balanced revenue budget for services delivered by the Housing and Homelessness service and to delivering the forecast HRA position.
- 7) To note the need for all existing pressures, savings delivery shortfalls and risks to be fully and proactively managed within Directorates.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 3 October 2023 (item 8); Finance and Resources Committee, 25 January 2024 (item 6); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

16. The Noise App

In response to a motion approved by Council on 4 May 2023, details were provided of the efficacy of new tools (such as digital applications including noise type Apps), along with an assessment of legal considerations (such as compliance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Scotland) Act 2000), potential cost implications, property ownership types potentially covered, and any other relevant factors.

Decision

- 1) To note the report by the Executive Director of Place.
- 2) To agree that, based on the investigation into the efficacy of digital applications and the legal advice provided regarding their usefulness, purchase of such applications should not be pursued at this time.

(References – Act of Council No. 25 of 4 May 2023; report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

17. Empty Homes Annual Report

An update was provided on the ongoing work of the Council's Empty Homes Officer and the current level of Empty Homes in the city.

Decision

- 1) To note the intention to recruit a second Empty Homes Officer for a trial period of 18 months using Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan funding.
- 2) To note the intention to create a supply of additional rental properties to be used as suitable temporary accommodation for homeless households through this work.
- 3) To note that future updates on Empty Homes which had been returned to use would be provided within the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee Business Bulletin.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 5 December 2023 (item 11); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

18. National Housing Trust (NHT) initiative: winding up NHT Limited Liability Partnerships

As part of the National Housing Trust (NHT) initiative, eight Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs) were set up in Edinburgh to support delivery of mid-market rent homes. The NHT LLPs were intended to remain in place until the homes were sold, between five and 10 years after being completed, and then wound up once their purpose was fulfilled. The wind up of a solvent LLP could be achieved either by a Members Voluntary Liquidation under the Insolvency legislation (an MVL) or by a voluntary strike off and dissolution. For some of the LLPs, a voluntary strike off and dissolution was preferred as this could be quicker and less costly for LLP partners than an MVL. Approval was sought to enable the Council, as a Member of the NHT LLPs, to agree to voluntary strike off and dissolution under the Companies Acts or an MVL as appropriate, when winding up the NHT LLPs.

Decision

To approve the wind up of the eight National Housing Trust (NHT) Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs) through voluntary strike off and dissolution or Members Voluntary Liquidation.

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

19. Edinburgh Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Delivery Plan – referral from the Policy and Sustainability Committee

The Policy and Sustainability Committee had referred a report on the Edinburgh Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) and the associated Delivery Plan to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee for information.

Decision

To note the report by the Executive Director of Place.

(References – Policy and Sustainability Committee, 15 December 2023 (item 3);
3referral from the Policy and Sustainability Committee, submitted.)

20. Internal Audit reports – Management of Ad hoc Mixed Tenure Works (PL2302), Housing Stock Condition – Tenant Safety, Damp and Mould (PL2303), Repairs Right First Time (PL2306) and service area responses for (PL2303) and (PL2306)

The Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee had referred Internal Audit reports on Management of Ad hoc Mixed Tenure Works (PL2302), Housing Stock Condition – Tenant Safety, Damp and Mould (PL2303), and Repairs Right First Time (PL2306), along with service area responses, to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee for information.

Motion

- 1) To agree that the monitoring of the audit management actions were included in the Housing Service Improvement Plan in order for them to monitor the aspects which include securing best value for the HRA and improving services for tenants.
- 2) To note the service area response for Housing Stock Condition – Tenant Safety, Damp and Mould (PL2303).
- 3) To note the service area response for Repairs Right First Time (PL2306).

- moved by Councillor Meagher, seconded by Councillor Pogson

Amendment

- 1) To agree that the monitoring of the audit management actions were included in the Housing Service Improvement Plan in order for them to monitor the aspects which include securing best value for the HRA and improving services for tenants.
- 2) To note the service area response for Housing Stock Condition – Tenant Safety, Damp and Mould (PL2303).
- 3) To note the service area response for Repairs Right First Time (PL2306).
- 4) To note from the report that: “The audit findings [...] support proposed changes to the organisational structure of the Housing and Homelessness Service” and that “an organisational review consultation is currently underway, with consultation closing on 28 March 2024”.
- 5) To request a briefing note is circulated to Committee members prior to 28th March 2024 with further details about the organisational review, proposed changes to the service and how these will address the issues identified in the internal audit reports, and other reports discussed at Committee. This briefing note should also outline what consultation / engagement has happened with unions.

- moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Mumford

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), the Amendment was accepted as an addendum to the motion.

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Meagher:

- 1) To agree that the monitoring of the audit management actions were included in the Housing Service Improvement Plan in order for them to monitor the aspects which include securing best value for the HRA and improving services for tenants.
- 2) To note the service area response for Housing Stock Condition – Tenant Safety, Damp and Mould (PL2303).
- 3) To note the service area response for Repairs Right First Time (PL2306).
- 4) To note from the report that: “The audit findings [...] support proposed changes to the organisational structure of the Housing and Homelessness Service” and that “an organisational review consultation is currently underway, with consultation closing on 28 March 2024”.
- 5) To request a briefing note be circulated to Committee members prior to 28th March 2024 with further details about the organisational review, proposed changes to the service and how these would address the issues identified in the internal audit reports, and other reports discussed at Committee. This briefing note should also outline what consultation / engagement has happened with unions.

(Reference – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee, 28 November 2023 (item 7); referral from the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee, submitted.)

21. By Councillor Dobbin - Voids Returned for Letting

Decision

To note that Councillor Dobbin had withdrawn the motion.

22. By Councillor Dobbin - Damp and Mould Cases Clearance Reporting

Decision

To note that Councillor Dobbin had withdrawn the motion.

23. By Councillor Parker - Opportunities for nature on HRA land

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

- 1) Notes that the Council declared a Nature Emergency in February 2023 recognising the “inherent value of nature, including its crucial importance as an integral part of culture and society, and for our health, wellbeing, and economy”.
- 2) Notes a number of existing Council strategies and pledges which focus on improving outcomes for biodiversity, for example the Thriving Greenspaces

strategy, Biodiversity Action Plan, Nature Network, Living Landscapes work and Million Tree City pledge.

- 3) Notes that much of the work under these strategies to date is primarily planned for Parks and Greenspace land, though welcomes discussions to focus on HRA land as part of the next stage of delivery of the Edinburgh Nature Network.
- 4) Considers that people - as well as birds, bees, butterflies, caterpillars, worms, badgers, foxes, otters, hedgehogs, fungi, lichen, mosses, plants, trees, grasses etc - have no concept of the artificial categorisation of HRA land vs Parks and Greenspace land, and that therefore general strategies which focus on improving outcomes for biodiversity should operate across these boundaries, and that this will require a joined up approach across the Council.

Additionally:

- 5) Notes that the HRA includes spending on the Neighbourhood Environment Programme – worth £3.5m in 22-23 and £2.3m in 23-24 – to cover funding for projects taking place on HRA land to improve estates, but that:
 - a. There are no specific outcomes or relevant KPIs defined for nature as part of these projects.
 - b. There is no data collected about: i) land converted from greenspace to hardstanding, ii) land converted from hard standing to greenspace or, iii) land converted to that with high biodiversity value, through these projects, despite these being key aims / indicators as part of the wider Council's nature strategies.
- 6) Notes that, whilst maintenance standards are consistent between HRA land and Parks and Greenspace land, monitoring of landscape quality is not – for example, Parks and Greenspace land is routinely assessed against Green Flag standards / Parks Quality Assessment (which includes the monitoring of positive outcomes for biodiversity), but this is not applied to HRA land.
- 7) Recognises that nature has a key role to play in improving health and wellbeing and, in line with a climate justice approach, the opportunity for people to access nature should apply equally across all of the Council's estate, be that on HRA land or Parks & Greenspace land.

Further notes that:

- 8) Estate-wide changes are taking place within the Parks and Greenspace service to change operations to improve outcomes for biodiversity and that this will impact on how some areas of HRA land are maintained, as well as how the HRA is charged for Parks & Greenspace services.
- 9) The Housing and Property Framework which contains NEP spending is due for retendering in November 2024.
- 10) Over the next year the Council will be developing a Local Housing Strategy for Edinburgh (2025-2030).

- 11) A Living Landscape map is being developed to outline where interventions are being planned as part of that project, and that this will allow for individuals to see the disaggregation of HRA land and Parks and Greenspace land within the project.

Therefore, with the aim of pulling together these different projects, outcomes, and concerns:

- 12) Requests a report to Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work committee in 2 cycles to set out:
 - a. A timetable and update for the Living Landscape mapping project concerning HRA land, with specific information about how this output will be integrated into wider workplans within the Housing service.
 - b. Recommendations for how resources allocated from the Neighbourhood Environment Programme in 24-25 can be better utilised to support aims for nature, including how these projects can dovetail with other Council strategies working on nature and biodiversity, and what additional data ought to be collected against these projects in order to evidence this going forward.
 - c. Recommendations for what specific outcomes for nature could be included as part of the NEPs programme when it is retendered later this year, including KPIs to be included as part of this.
 - d. Recommendations for how the above actions can be monitored through committee going forward, including a proposed future reporting schedule around "Opportunities for nature on HRA land" / tackling the Nature Emergency on HRA land, cognisant of the possible overlapping of projects and reporting with Culture & Communities committee and suggestions about how this should be managed.
- 13) Agrees that the Local Housing Strategy will include a specific topic paper focused on improving opportunities for nature as part of it, and that this will be developed in consultation with relevant officers / external groups with expertise on nature and biodiversity."

Motion

To approve motion by Councillor Parker.

- moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Mumford

Amendment 1

To add to the motion by Councillor Parker:

- 1) Adds new Point 12:

"Notes that Culture and Communities committee has requested a report regarding a 'Right To Grow' strategy on Council-owned land that is deemed suitable for cultivation which may also have implications on HRA land."

- 2) Inserts into b) after "...Neighbourhood Environment Programme in 24-25":
" , while still being led by residents,"
- 3) Inserts into b) after "...as part of the wider Council's nature strategies":
" , while noting that discussions may have already taken place with residents as part of the 24-25 NEPS."
- 4) Renumbers accordingly.

- moved by Councillor Caldwell, seconded by Councillor Flannery

Amendment 2

To add to the motion by Councillor Parker:

- 1) Adds at 12:

e. The cost implications and officer time of taking on this work.
- 2) Amends 13:

"Once the report is available then committee should consider whether the Local Housing Strategy will include a specific topic paper focused on improving opportunities for nature as part of it, and that this will be developed in consultation with relevant officers / external groups with expertise on nature and biodiversity".

- moved by Councillor Whyte, seconded by Councillor Bruce

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendment 1 was accepted as an addendum to the motion, and Amendment 2 was accepted as an addendum to the motion.

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Parker:

- 1) To note that the Council declared a Nature Emergency in February 2023 recognising the "inherent value of nature, including its crucial importance as an integral part of culture and society, and for our health, wellbeing, and economy".
- 2) To note a number of existing Council strategies and pledges which focused on improving outcomes for biodiversity, for example the Thriving Greenspaces strategy, Biodiversity Action Plan, Nature Network, Living Landscapes work and Million Tree City pledge.

- 3) To note that much of the work under these strategies to date was primarily planned for Parks and Greenspace land, though welcomes discussions to focus on HRA land as part of the next stage of delivery of the Edinburgh Nature Network.
- 4) To consider that people - as well as birds, bees, butterflies, caterpillars, worms, badgers, foxes, otters, hedgehogs, fungi, lichen, mosses, plants, trees, grasses etc – had no concept of the artificial categorisation of HRA land vs Parks and Greenspace land, and that therefore general strategies which focused on improving outcomes for biodiversity should operate across these boundaries, and that this would require a joined up approach across the Council.
- 5) To note that the HRA included spending on the Neighbourhood Environment Programme – worth £3.5m in 22-23 and £2.3m in 23-24 – to cover funding for projects taking place on HRA land to improve estates, but that:
 - a. There were no specific outcomes or relevant KPIs defined for nature as part of these projects.
 - b. There was no data collected about: i) land converted from greenspace to hardstanding, ii) land converted from hard standing to greenspace or, iii) land converted to that with high biodiversity value, through these projects, despite these being key aims / indicators as part of the wider Council’s nature strategies wider Council’s nature strategies, while noting that discussions may have already taken place with residents as part of the 24-25 NEPS.
- 6) To note that, whilst maintenance standards were consistent between HRA land and Parks and Greenspace land, monitoring of landscape quality was not – for example, Parks and Greenspace land was routinely assessed against Green Flag standards / Parks Quality Assessment (which included the monitoring of positive outcomes for biodiversity), but this was not applied to HRA land.
- 7) To recognise that nature had a key role to play in improving health and wellbeing and, in line with a climate justice approach, the opportunity for people to access nature should apply equally across all of the Council’s estate, be that on HRA land or Parks & Greenspace land.
- 8) To note that estate-wide changes were taking place within the Parks and Greenspace service to change operations to improve outcomes for biodiversity and that this would impact on how some areas of HRA land were maintained, as well as how the HRA was charged for Parks & Greenspace services.
- 9) To note the Housing and Property Framework which would contain NEP spending and was due for retendering in November 2024.
- 10) To note that over the next year the Council would be developing a Local Housing Strategy for Edinburgh (2025-2030).

- 11) To note that a Living Landscape map would be developed to outline where interventions would be planned as part of that project, and that this would allow for individuals to see the disaggregation of HRA land and Parks and Greenspace land within the project.
- 12) To note that Culture and Communities committee had requested a report regarding a 'Right To Grow' strategy on Council-owned land that would be deemed suitable for cultivation which may also would have implications on HRA land.
- 13) Therefore, with the aim of pulling together these different projects, outcomes, and concerns, to request a report to Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work committee in 2 cycles to set out:
 - a. A timetable and update for the Living Landscape mapping project concerning HRA land, with specific information about how this output will be integrated into wider workplans within the Housing service.
 - b. Recommendations for how resources allocated from the Neighbourhood Environment Programme in 24-25, while still being led by residents, could be better utilised to support aims for nature, including how these projects could dovetail with other Council strategies working on nature and biodiversity, and what additional data ought to be collected against these projects in order to evidence this going forward.
 - c. Recommendations for what specific outcomes for nature could be included as part of the NEPs programme when it was retendered later this year, including KPIs to be included as part of this.
 - d. Recommendations for how the above actions could be monitored through committee going forward, including a proposed future reporting schedule around "Opportunities for nature on HRA land" / tackling the Nature Emergency on HRA land, cognisant of the possible overlapping of projects and reporting with Culture & Communities committee and suggestions about how this should be managed.
 - e. The cost implications and officer time of taking on this work.
- 13) To consider, once the report was available, whether the Local Housing Strategy would include a specific topic paper focused on improving opportunities for nature as part of it, and that this would be developed in consultation with relevant officers / external groups with expertise on nature and biodiversity.