

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 8 August 2023

Present

Councillors Meagher (Convener), Bruce, Caldwell, Campbell, Dobbin (items 1 to 8), Flannery, Graham, Macinnes (substituting for Councillor Dobbin, item 9 onwards), McFarlane (substituting for Councillor Kumar), Miller (substituting for Councillor Rae, items 1 to 5), Parker, Rae (item 6 onwards) and Whyte.

1. Deputations

Living Rent Lochend Branch

(in relation to Item 16 – Motion by Councillor Caldwell – Geographic spread of Council Housing in SHIP, Acquisitions & Disposals)

The deputation highlighted the issue of empty homes across the city. There were currently 1,453 empty homes across the city, 638 of which were located in the northeast of the city. This meant that 1 in 4 council homes in Edinburgh were currently unoccupied. Currently there were 23,000 people on the waiting list to be housed in social accommodation, with many being told it could be up to 15 years before they are housed. Currently £30m in rent was being lost due to empty homes.

The deputation argued that this was caused by the outsourcing of the voids team to the private sector. Lack of social housing had caused huge expenditure on temporary accommodation, which the landlords and B&B's were profiting from. Temporary accommodation was not a fix as people needed somewhere to call their home and that is why the social housing stock needed to be brought back into permanent use.

Living Rent stated that private companies had no interest in providing quality accommodation for the people of Edinburgh or bringing empty homes back into social housing stock and were only interested in profit. The dangers of this could be demonstrated in examples such as the tragedy of the Grenfell Tower disaster.

(see item 16 below).

2. Minutes

Decision

To approve the minute of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 9 May 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 1(2) – Capital City Partnership – Progress update
 - Action 3 – Edinburgh International Conference Centre – annual update for the year ending 31 December 2021
 - Action 4 – Living Hours City – Response to a motion from Councillor Campbell
 - Action 5(1) – 2023/24 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme
 - Action 6 – Funding of affordable housing through the Scottish Government’s Affordable Housing Supply Programme
 - Action 7 – Tenant Hardship Fund (2023/24)
 - Action 9 – Edinburgh International Conference Centre – Shareholders’ Agreement and Strategic Delivery Agreement
 - Action 10(1) – Gig Economy Task Force – progress update
 - Action 11 – Housing Service Improvement Plan – Update
 - Action 12 – Mixed Tenure Improvement Service
 - Action 13 – Place Directorate - Revenue Budget Monitoring 2022/23 – Month Eight Forecast
 - Action 14 – Motion by Councillor Campbell – Damp and Mould
 - Action 15 – Motion by Councillor Caldwell – Taking stock of affordable housing by ward in the City of Edinburgh
 - Action 19(2) – Capital Funding Opportunities for Council Housing
 - Action 20 – UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update
- 2) To otherwise note the remaining outstanding actions.
- 3) To agree to circulate the letter sent to ministers at item 19(2) to committee members.

(Reference – Rolling Actions Log, submitted.)

5. Business Bulletin

The Business Bulletin was presented.

Decision

- 1) To note the Business Bulletin.
- 2) To agree any upgrades to secure door entry systems which were already in progress would continue while new installations would be paused until a report on the programme is brought to Committee.

(Reference – Business Bulletin, submitted.)

6. Annual Assurance Statement on Housing Services 2022/23

The City of Edinburgh Council's Annual Assurance Statement on housing services and the Assurance Statement Summary of Compliance were submitted for approval for formal submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). The SHR required all social landlords to prepare and publish an Annual Assurance Statement and Assurance Statement Summary of Compliance to confirm to their tenants and the SHR that they were meeting the requirements of the Regulatory Framework.

Decision

To approve the City of Edinburgh Council's Annual Assurance Statement on housing services and the Assurance Statement Summary of Compliance for formal submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator. (Reference – report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

7. Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan – Annual Update on Progress

The Scottish Government instructed all local authorities to develop, produce and cost a five-year Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) by 31 December 2018.

Committee agreed to receive annual updates on progress of the plan. The third annual update was submitted covering the period from April 2022 to the end of March 2023, in line with the Scottish Government reporting requirements.

Motion

- 1) To note the progress made to date.
- 2) To note that Scottish Government funding beyond 2023/24 was not yet confirmed and that officers were in discussion with Scottish Government to seek clarity on the position beyond this and would provide an update to Committee once the position had been clarified.
- 3) To agree the content for submission to the Scottish Government.
- moved by Councillor Meagher, seconded by Councillor Graham

Amendment

- 1) To note the progress made to date.

- 2) To note that Scottish Government funding beyond 2023/24 was not yet confirmed and that officers were in discussion with Scottish Government to seek clarity on the position beyond this and would provide an update to Committee once the position had been clarified.
- 3) To agree the content for submission to the Scottish Government.
- 4) To note the high proportion individuals assessed as homeless reporting mental health challenges and welcome the developing link of social work into the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) as well as the 'Psychology for Hostels' pilot.
- 5) To request exploration of embedding of a social work officer and/or psychologist into the MDT expansion to RSL (once possible as per 2.8.6 of the report by the Executive Director of Place), Homelessness to Home, and PRS teams respectively, to the service's discretion.
- 6) To note the impact that homelessness had on potentially vulnerable individuals with potentially limited agency such as young people under 17, care-experienced people, and individuals with disabilities outlined in the Equality Act; together with parents, guardians, and carers, and as such request that additional data be collected under 'Support Needs' for next year's update to include 'Responsible for Dependant'.

- moved by Councillor Caldwell, seconded by Councillor Flannery

In accordance with Standing Order 22(12), the Amendment was accepted as an addendum to the motion.

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Meagher:

- 1) To note the progress made to date.
- 2) To note that Scottish Government funding beyond 2023/24 was not yet confirmed and that officers were in discussion with Scottish Government to seek clarity on the position beyond this and would provide an update to Committee once the position had been clarified.
- 3) To agree the content for submission to the Scottish Government.
- 4) To note the high proportion individuals assessed as homeless reporting mental health challenges and welcome the developing link of social work into the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) as well as the 'Psychology for Hostels' pilot.
- 5) To request exploration of embedding of a social work officer and/or psychologist into the MDT expansion to RSL (once possible as per 2.8.6 of the report by the Executive Director of Place), Homelessness to Home, and PRS teams respectively, to the service's discretion.
- 6) To note the impact that homelessness had on potentially vulnerable individuals with potentially limited agency such as young people under 17, care-experienced people, and individuals with disabilities outlined in the Equality Act; together with parents, guardians, and carers, and as such request that additional

data be collected under 'Support Needs' for next year's update to include 'Responsible for Dependant'.

- 7) To agree the statutory return report due to Committee in October would contain information on reasons and trends behind the increase in homelessness resulting from RSL tenancy loss and supported accommodation.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 18 September 2020 (item 1); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

8. Place Based Investment Programme Allocations

Details were provided of recommended allocations of Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP) funding for 2023/24 and 2024/25, and proposals for engagement to be undertaken with councillors and communities on the allocation of PBIP funding for 2025/26.

Decision

- 1) To agree the allocations of the Place Based Investment Programme (PBIP) for 2023/24 and 2024/25, as set out in the report by the Executive Director of Place.
- 2) To agree that a call for projects to be funded in 2025/26 be issued to all councillors, supplemented by engagement on a locality basis, with the outcome brought back to Committee for a decision on 2025/26 funding.

Declaration of interests

Councillor Hyslop made a transparent statement in the above item as a director of a company currently in negotiations to operate the café.

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

9. UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update

A progress summary was provided of projects which were funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in the period October 2022 – March 2023.

Committee was asked to agree additional spending under People and Skills Interventions in order to utilise an anticipated underspend from the Multiply Programme and that two feasibility projects were funded from the portion of allocation earmarked for Regional Prosperity Framework delivery.

Motion

- 1) To note the end of financial year report provided to the UK Government and the progress made with UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) programme delivery in Edinburgh.
- 2) To note the underspend on the Multiply programme as a result of a delayed start in delivery and the permission from UK Government to utilise this underspend on interventions in the People and Skills strand of the UK SPF.
- 3) To agree the recommended additional spend on projects delivering People and Skills Interventions, and feasibility studies under the Regional Prosperity

Framework, to ensure that Edinburgh's UK SPF allocation, including Multiply, is fully utilised in 2023/24.

- moved by Councillor Meagher, seconded by Councillor Graham

Amendment

- 1) To note the end of financial year report provided to the UK Government and the progress made with UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) programme delivery in Edinburgh.
- 2) To note the underspend on the Multiply programme as a result of a delayed start in delivery and the permission from UK Government to utilise this underspend on interventions in the People and Skills strand of the UK SPF.
- 3) To agree the recommended additional spend on projects delivering People and Skills Interventions, and feasibility studies under the Regional Prosperity Framework, to ensure that Edinburgh's UK SPF allocation, including Multiply, is fully utilised in 2023/24.
- 4) Notes that the information provided about projects proposed to receive additional funding does not include any rationale about why projects have been proposed for this, nor about their relative success / performance against targets to date.
- 5) Requests that additional information about the projects proposed for additional funding is shared before a decision to award additional funding is made.
- 6) Requests that this information includes: what percentage of total project spend the additional funding represents; a brief description of the performance of projects to date, including how they are currently meeting targets; a brief description of what additional benefits will be realised as a result of the additional funding.

In accordance with Standing Order 22(12), the Amendment was adjusted and accepted as an addendum to the motion.

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Meagher:

- 1) To note the end of financial year report provided to the UK Government and the progress made with UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) programme delivery in Edinburgh.
- 2) To note the underspend on the Multiply programme as a result of a delayed start in delivery and the permission from UK Government to utilise this underspend on interventions in the People and Skills strand of the UK SPF.
- 3) To agree the recommended additional spend, subject to further detailed discussion with group spokespeople, on projects delivering People and Skills Interventions, and feasibility studies under the Regional Prosperity Framework, to ensure that Edinburgh's UK SPF allocation, including Multiply, was fully utilised in 2023/24.

- 4) To note that the information provided about projects proposed to receive additional funding did not include any rationale about why projects had been proposed for this, nor about their relative success / performance against targets to date.
- 5) To request that additional information about the projects proposed for additional funding was shared before a decision to award additional funding was made.
- 6) To request that this information include: what percentage of total project spend the additional funding represented; a brief description of the performance of projects to date, including how they were currently meeting targets; a brief description of what additional benefits would be realised as a result of the additional funding.
- 7) To agree the information requested would be circulated immediately following the meeting.

Declaration of interests

Councillor Caldwell made a non-financial declaration interest in the above item as a board member of Capital City Partnership which was recommended for funding in the report.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 22 June 2022 (item 6) and 4 August 2022 (item 6); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

10. Affordable Childcare for Working Parents

An update was provided on the delivery of the current model for the Affordable Childcare for Working Parents service, sources of childcare support and a proposal for a future delivery model which included supporting eligible parents to access Universal Credit and supporting childcare providers to operate sustainable business models to ensure the availability of childcare for working parents in areas of deprivation.

Decision

- 1) To note the background to the current service.
- 2) To agree to commission four childcare providers to deliver Affordable Childcare for Working Parents in areas of deprivation in the city. The services would be for Early Years as well as school aged children.
- 3) To agree to use existing Council services to offer an income review service for parents wishing to access the Affordable Childcare for Working Parents to assess their eligibility for various Government funded support and, if appropriate, refer them for Council-funded subsidy and Employability support. (References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 1 December 2022 (item 10); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

11. Mapping of Existing Provision and Stage 1 NOLB Co-Production

Approval was sought for commencing an open grants process for No One Left Behind (NOLB) Stage 1 provision, for delivery over a three-year period from 1 April 2024 until

31 March 2027 (subject to Scottish Government funding allocation), at an estimated cost of £300,000 per annum.

An update was also provided on the Scottish Government's plans for NOLB Next Phase delivery and local-level co-production plans for service delivery to commence from 1 April 2024.

Motion

- 1) To approve commencing an open grants process for No One Left Behind (NOLB) Stage 1 provision for delivery over a three-year period from 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2027, at an estimated cost of £300,000 per annum, subject to Scottish Government funding.
- 2) To note that additional preparation is underway to identify any expected gaps in provision which may be addressed by utilising NOLB Next Phase funding.
- 3) To note that NOLB Next Phase funding is expected to be in place from April 2024 and, based on current funding levels and methodology, the Edinburgh allocation is anticipated to be around £890,000 per annum.

- moved by Councillor Meagher, seconded by Councillor Graham

Amendment

- 1) To approve commencing an open grants process for No One Left Behind (NOLB) Stage 1 provision for delivery over a three-year period from 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2027, at an estimated cost of £300,000 per annum, subject to Scottish Government funding.
- 2) Committee believes that disadvantaged young people from all SIMD deciles have a right to access NOLB support, and while focus (as defined in section 4.4.2) is on SIMD areas 1 and 2, agrees that SIMD area alone should not be used as the only measure to justify support to a young person.
- 3) To note that additional preparation is underway to identify any expected gaps in provision which may be addressed by utilising NOLB Next Phase funding.
- 4) To note that NOLB Next Phase funding is expected to be in place from April 2024 and, based on current funding levels and methodology, the Edinburgh allocation is anticipated to be around £890,000 per annum.

In accordance with Standing Order 22(12), the Amendment was accepted as an addendum to the motion.

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Meagher:

- 1) To approve commencing an open grants process for No One Left Behind (NOLB) Stage 1 provision for delivery over a three-year period from 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2027, at an estimated cost of £300,000 per annum, subject to Scottish Government funding.
- 2) Committee believes that disadvantaged young people from all SIMD deciles have a right to access NOLB support, and while focus (as defined in section

4.4.2) is on SIMD areas 1 and 2, agrees that SIMD area alone should not be used as the only measure to justify support to a young person.

- 3) To note that additional preparation is underway to identify any expected gaps in provision which may be addressed by utilising NOLB Next Phase funding.
- 4) To note that NOLB Next Phase funding is expected to be in place from April 2024 and, based on current funding levels and methodology, the Edinburgh allocation is anticipated to be around £890,000 per annum.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 1 December 2022 (item 13); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

12. Fair Work, Gig Economy and Living Hours City Progress Update

A summary of progress towards delivery of actions recommended by the short-life Gig Economy Task Force was provided, including a proposed initial draft of an Edinburgh Fair Work Charter, and a proposed timescale for its further development and implementation.

Decision

- 1) To note the draft Edinburgh Fair Work Charter, and the proposed timescale for its development, consultation and implementation.
- 2) To note the initial work underway to assess the impact of living hours accreditation on Council services, and that a further report on the findings of this assessment would be available for consideration by Committee in October 2023.
- 3) To note the progress towards other actions recommended by the short-life Gig Economy Task Force and that a further update on progress would be available for consideration by Committee in December 2023. (References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 1 December 2022 (item 14) and 9 March 2023 (item 16); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

13. Internal Audit: Open and Overdue Internal Audit Actions – Performance Dashboard as at 22 June 2023

On 1 August 2023, the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee considered a report on Open and Overdue Internal Audit Actions – Performance Dashboard as at 22 June 2023, which provided an overview of the status of the overdue Internal Audit findings. On 22 June 2023, there were a total of 136 open Internal Audit management actions, with 19 of these overdue. This was referred to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee for information.

Decision

To note the report.

(References – Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee, 1 August 2023 (item 5); referral from the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee, submitted.)

14. Affordable Housing Policy Update

On 14 June 2023, the Planning Committee considered a report which provided an update on how the Affordable Housing Policy had supported delivery of affordable housing in 2021/22 and 2022/23. This was referred to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee for information.

Decision

To note the report. (References – Planning Committee, 14 June 2023 (item 3); referral from the Planning Committee, submitted.)

15. Motion by Councillor Meagher – Family and Household Support

The following motion by Councillor Meagher was submitted in terms of Standing Order17:

“Committee:

Recognises the role played by Family and Household Support officers in working to help to prevent homelessness and dealing with anti-social behaviour.

Notes that the service currently reports to the Culture and Communities committee.

Acknowledges that it will be more effective for that service to report via the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee.

Therefore, calls for a report to HHFW Committee in October on the work of the FHS Service.”

Motion

To approve the motion by Councillor Meagher. - moved by Councillor Meagher, Seconded by Councillor Graham

Amendment

To add at the end of the motion by Councillor Meagher:

Recognises that this will be the first report the Committee receives on Family and Household Support and therefore requests the report includes a general overview of the service, including information about:

- The size and structure of the team, and details of any internal / external partnerships.
- What budget is attached to the work, including detail about funding streams.
- What data is collected within Family and Household Support in cases of anti-social behaviour, and how this data is routinely shared with and used by the housing service to support tenants / promote tenancy sustainment.
- How trauma informed working is promoted in the team, including how the team support both victims and perpetrators of anti-social behaviour within the housing service.

- moved by Councillor Parker, Seconded by Councillor Rae

In accordance with Standing Order 22(12), the amendment was accepted as an addendum to the motion.

Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Campbell:

- 1) To recognise the role played by Family and Household Support officers in working to help to prevent homelessness and dealing with anti-social behaviour.
- 2) To note that the service currently reported to the Culture and Communities committee.
- 3) To acknowledge that it would be more effective for that service to report via the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee.
- 4) Therefore, to call for a report to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee in October 2023 on the work of the Family and Household Support Service.
- 5) To recognise that this would be the first report the Committee receives on Family and Household Support and therefore to request the report included a general overview of the service, including information about:
 - The size and structure of the team, and details of any internal / external partnerships.
 - What budget was attached to the work, including detail about funding streams.
 - What data was collected within Family and Household Support in cases of anti-social behaviour, and how this data was routinely shared with and used by the housing service to support tenants / promote tenancy sustainment.
 - How trauma informed working was promoted in the team, including how the team supported both victims and perpetrators of anti-social behaviour within the housing service.

16. Motion by Councillor Caldwell – Geographic spread of Council Housing in SHIP, Acquisitions and Disposals

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

“Committee

Affirms;

That council housing, as part of Edinburgh’s mixed housing, should be available and accessible to residents across all 17 City Wards.

Notes;

- 1) The importance of residents being able to live in Council housing in communities of their choice, i.e., where they have local ties.
- 2) The Acquisition and Disposal Programme started in 2015 reported to the June 2022 committee that 175 homes have been bought by the Council and 107 sold.

- 3) Recent planned major Council housebuilding programmes are located exclusively in the Northwest and Southwest localities, with the Northeast and Southeast localities' affordable housing projects primarily being Housing Association (HA) or Mid-Market Rents (MMR), supplemented by Private Sector Leading (PSL) under Scottish Short Secure Tenancy (SSST).
- 4) That PSL, HA and MMR have a key role to play in Edinburgh's housing mix, as does long-term Council-owned property.

Therefore requests;

- 5) An Acquisition and Disposals update on the business bulletin, within 3 cycles which includes an updated figure of the disposals and acquisitions since the scheme's inception, broken down by ward, and how disposals in these two localities are being offset by Acquisitions in the same localities.
- 6) An update to efforts being made to build new Council Housing in the Northeast and Southeast localities to be included in the next Strategic Housing Investment Plan Report."

- moved by Councillor Caldwell, seconded by Councillor Flannery

Amendment 1

Deletes paragraph 4) of the motion by Councillor Caldwell and replaces with:

- 4) That whilst the Council currently relies on Private Sector Leasing (PSL) and Mid-Market Rental (MMR) properties to fulfil its statutory obligations in terms of housing and homelessness, the long-term ambition of the Council should be to reduce this reliance and drastically increase the number of socially rented homes with genuinely affordable tenancies, and not to facilitate growth in an already bloated private sector market through PSL, or to prioritise provision of MMR properties which are still unaffordable and restrictive for many people.

- moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Rae

Amendment 2

Deletes paragraphs 1 to 4 of the motion by Councillor Caldwell and replaces with:

- 1) That geographic location of Council owned HRA properties is subject to a complex mix of historic variables and is never likely to be evenly spread particularly where this is assessed by Council Wards which are subject to regular boundary changes over time.
- 2) That Council housing is only one element of social housing provision and often RSLs can provide more appropriate and locally focussed provision for specific neighbourhoods such as through housing cooperatives.
- 3) That PSL, HA and MMR have a key role to play in Edinburgh's Housing mix and should not be disadvantaged for investment compared to Council owned property

Agrees paragraphs 5 and 6 of the motion by Councillor Caldwell, renumbering as 4 and 5 and adds a new paragraph 6 as follows:

- 6) Agrees that this information is meaningless unless presented alongside wider data on the location of current tenancies across affordable housing tenures and the relative levels of turnover within these and that any Report or Business Bulletin item should provide comprehensive information in this regard.

- moved by Councillor Whyte, seconded by Councillor Bruce

In accordance with Standing Order 22(12), Amendment 2 was adjusted and accepted as an addendum to the motion.

Voting

The voting was as follows:

For the motion (as adjusted) - 4 votes

For Amendment 1 - 7 votes

(For the motion: Councillors Bruce, Caldwell, Flannery and Whyte.

For Amendment 1: Councillors Campbell, Macinnes, McFarlane, Meagher, Parker, Pogson and Rae.)

Decision

To approve the following amendment by Councillor Parker:

- 1) To affirm that council housing, as part of Edinburgh's mixed housing, should be available and accessible to residents across all 17 City Wards.
- 2) To note the importance of residents being able to live in Council housing in communities of their choice, i.e., where they have local ties.
- 3) To note the Acquisition and Disposal Programme started in 2015 and reported to the June 2022 committee that 175 homes had been bought by the Council and 107 sold.
- 4) To note that Recent planned major Council housebuilding programmes were located exclusively in the Northwest and Southwest localities, with the Northeast and Southeast localities' affordable housing projects primarily being Housing Association (HA) or Mid-Market Rents (MMR), supplemented by Private Sector Leading (PSL) under Scottish Short Secure Tenancy (SSST).
- 5) To note that whilst the Council currently relied on Private Sector Leasing (PSL) and Mid-Market Rental (MMR) properties to fulfil its statutory obligations in terms of housing and homelessness, the long-term ambition of the Council should be to reduce this reliance and drastically increase the number of socially rented homes with genuinely affordable tenancies, and not to facilitate growth in an already bloated private sector market through PSL, or to prioritise provision of MMR properties which were still unaffordable and restrictive for many people.
- 6) To request an Acquisition and Disposals update on the business bulletin, within 3 cycles which included an updated figure of the disposals and acquisitions since the scheme's inception, broken down by ward, and how disposals in these two localities were being offset by Acquisitions in the same localities.

- 7) To request an update to efforts being made to build new Council Housing in the Northeast and Southeast localities to be included in the next Strategic Housing Investment Plan Report.