

## Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 5 December 2023

### Present

Councillors Meagher (Convener), Bruce, Caldwell, Dobbin, Flannery, Hyslop, Key, Munro (substituting for Councillor Whyte) (items 2-19), Parker, Pogson and Rae.

### 1. Deputations

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#### a) The Challenges Group in relation to Item 8 – UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update

Lynn Houmdi was in attendance on behalf of The Challenges Group. She gave a presentation about the current programme called Making Work *Work*, which was an award-winning, innovative programme based on proven methods, lived experience, continuous improvement and collaboration. This programme helped almost 200 women across the Scotland to come back to meaningful work combined with other commitments. The programme was funded by UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Support was provided to 75 unemployed or underemployed women in Edinburgh to re-enter or progress in work after a career break in form of support groups, online training sessions, mentoring, self-study, masterclasses, and qualifications. The second short project supporting women called LEAP (Learning, Employability and Purpose) was described as a collaborative project with Firstpoint. The LEAP programme supported 10 highly skilled women facing employment barriers by providing online sessions, 8-10 weeks pro-bono work placements in social enterprises, training for social enterprise managers. Lynn Houmdi spoke about two training cohorts of 36 women and provided figures which demonstrated the reduction in unemployment and underemployment after these training sessions. The positive feedback from users was presented to the committee members.

(See Item 8 below)

#### b) NUS (National Union of Students) Scotland in relation to Item 9 – Fair Work Charter

Ellie Gomersall addressed committee on behalf of NUS Scotland about the Fair Work Charter, highlighting that the living wage for apprentices was excluded from the Fair Work Charter, and that those young people had to live in extreme poverty. On average the minimum wage for apprentices was £5.28 per hour. Committee members were asked to imagine living on this wage taking into account that young people had different circumstances, such as family, children, or carers responsibilities. The Scottish

Government's own fair work principles stated that apprentices should be paid the real living wage. Susan, who was one of apprentices, carer and parent to 6-year-old, was in attendance and spoke about regulations in Scotland related to hours of study and supervision which resulted in working full time hours with no financial support available for her. She compared her monthly salary, based on £5.28 per hour, to monthly rent costs and childcare costs. She wouldn't be able to live in Edinburgh to complete her apprenticeship and it was not the right benchmark for the capital city.

**(See Item 9 below)**

**c) Edinburgh Tenants Federation in relation to Item 15 – Tenant Participation and Community Engagement 2024/2027**

Betty Stone and Ilene Campbell were in attendance on behalf of the Edinburgh Tenants Federation (ETF), which was established in 1990 to represent tenants, and continuously worked in partnership with The City of Edinburgh Council, along with social and private tenants. ETF supported tenants needs and acted as a conduit of information for the Council. ETF conducted consultations, visits to identify repairs issues, provided training for students, developed mental health groups, and meetings with tenants. ETF identified issues between tenants and the repairs department at the Council ETF representatives had also had meetings with Service Directors to discuss service improvements and make suggestions about how to deliver the best value to tenants. Since October last year there had been a forum to discuss concerns about rent changes and funding, especially towards Tenant Hardship which had been a great success. ETF was also actively involved in homelessness and poverty. Betty Stone highlighted an urgent need for funding to employ more staff at ETF during the cost of living crisis.

**(See Item 15 below)**

**d) Neighbourhood Alliance in relation to Item 15 – Tenant Participation and Community Engagement 2024/2027**

Susan Carr (Project Manager) spoke on behalf of Neighbourhood Alliance. She thanked Council for the work they had supported for the last 20 years, including the regeneration of Craigmillar. Two main principles of the Community Alliance Trust (CAT), the Neighbourhood Alliance's parent organisation, were to build community trust and bring social support to make Craigmillar the best place it could be. The Neighbourhood Alliance was working collaboratively with statutory services. There were different factors to support housing and work as a part of community such as working groups, forums, different facilities, and income maximisation advice. She described different projects to support the Craigmillar community. A placemaking study was including in the report which flagged information used for the future development. The customer satisfaction score was 61 out of potential 98 so there was a need to investigate customers' needs along with establishing a local development plan. The study also highlighted changes in the demography of this area and a lack of social spaces. The Neighbourhood Alliance wanted to address those issues by planning social events and developing a third part synergy network to adapt diversity, and also by engaging with local organisations. Alternative solutions had been looked at after

recent events at Bonfire night. The return of investment was good value for money, delivering social return, economic benefits and addressing health and wellbeing issues.

**(See Item 15 below)**

## **2. Minutes**

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### **Decision**

To approve the minute of the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee of 3 October 2023 as a correct record subject to a correction on page 17: “To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Flannery Parker”.

## **3. Work Programme**

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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**

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

### **Decision**

- 1) To agree to close the following actions:
  - Action 5 (2, 5, 6 and 7) - Response to motion by Councillor Campbell – Coillesdene House Lifts
  - Action 7 (3) - Capital Funding Opportunities for Council Housing
  - Action 8 - By Councillor Campbell - Waste and Cleansing Services on Council Housing Estates
  - Action 9 (2) - Business Bulletin
  - Action 10 (5) - Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan – Annual Update on Progress
  - Action 12 (2) - UK Shared Prosperity Fund
  - Action 14 (2) - Motion by Councillor Caldwell – Geographic spread of Council Housing in SHIP, Acquisitions & Disposals
  - Action 17 - Whole House Retrofit
  - Action 19 - Housing Revenue Account Budget Strategy 2024/252)
  - Action 20 - Tenant Participation and Community Engagement 2024/2027
  - Action 24 - Family and Household Support Service
  - Action 25(1) - By Councillor Flannery – Student Homelessness Response
  - Action 26(1 and 2) - By Councillor Parker – Temporary accommodation for asylum
- 2) To agree to update the following actions:
  - Action 4 – to request that feedback from the Scottish Government on Inchpark Living to be circulated to members.

- Action 23 – to request that this be followed up with Councillor Parker to arrange a meeting in January.

3) To otherwise note the remaining outstanding actions.

(Reference – Rolling Actions Log, submitted.)

## **5. Business Bulletin**

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The Business Bulletin was presented.

### **Decision**

- 1) To note the Business Bulletin.
- 2) To note that officers were preparing a response to the Scottish Government's consultation on Housing for Varying Needs and that this would be submitted or circulated to committee.

(Reference – Business Bulletin, submitted.)

## **6. No One Left Behind – Stage 1 Provision 2024-27**

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Following Committee's decision on 8 August 2023 to commence an open grants process for No One Left Behind - Stage 1 Provision for delivery over a three-year period from 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2027, it was recommended that Council award grant funding to third party organisations, up to the value of £301,000 per annum, for a maximum of three years, to support young people into positive destinations, and to progress in employment, in the future.

### **Decision**

- 1) To note the small grants process which was implemented to meet needs identified for Stage 1 provision for young people across the city.
- 2) To approve the award of third-party grants to seven services (detailed in Appendix 3 of the report by the Executive Director of Place) up to a maximum total cost of £301,000 per annum.
- 3) To note that officers would work with the successful applicants to finalise funding agreements to commence delivery of the new No One Left Behind – Stage 1 Provision from 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2027 (subject to annual Scottish Government funding).
- 4) To note the 24 applications not recommended for an award of funding.

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

## **7. No One Left Behind – Next Phase**

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Details were provided of the work undertaken by the City of Edinburgh Council and the Local Employability Partnership (LEP) to put in place additional services funded by Scottish Government, under the No One Left Behind (NOLB) strategy, in anticipation of the award amount for funding for 2024/25. A recommended funding plan was set out for Committee approval.

## Decision

- 1) To note the expectation that additional funding of approx. £890,000 would be allocated to the Council for No One Left Behind (NOLB) delivery, to be fully utilised in 2024/25.
- 2) To note the urgency in developing and implementing a comprehensive programme to ensure delivery of NOLB Next Phase could take place from 1 April 2024.
- 3) To agree, subject to this additional funding being made available, to allocate:
  - Up to £330,000 on a one-off basis to continue delivery of four projects, currently funded by Young Person's Guarantee funding, for 12 months from 1 April 2024, pending confirmed outcomes for 2023/24.
  - £50,000 to Capital City Partnership for the creation of employer cultural awareness sessions to enhance in-work support for Black and Asian Minority Ethnicity communities.
  - Up to £90,000 to support current Network of Employability Support and Training providers with rising operation costs due to inflation.
  - Up to £250,000 to recruit a team of dedicated Edinburgh Guarantee staff to engage with hard-to-reach communities and signpost to providers across the strategic skills pipeline.
  - £100,000 to launch an open grants process to expand the existing NOLB programme with a specific citywide Additional Support Needs Stage 1 provision.
  - The remaining funds, but no more than £100,000, for the creation of a dedicated NOLB transition fund across all NOLB activities to meet increasing client costs.

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

## 8. UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update

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Details were provided of projects which were funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF), covering activity during the period 1 April – 30 September 2023. Recommendations for allocation of the funds earmarked for delivering projects aligned with the Regional Prosperity Fund (RPF) were also presented.

### Motion

- 1) To note the six-month report provided to the UK Government and the progress made with UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) programme delivery in Edinburgh.
- 2) To note that the People and Skills projects which were allocated funding from the underspent 2022/23 Multiply allocation had commenced delivery.
- 3) To agree to allocate £130,415 on five projects under the Regional Prosperity Framework (RPF)'s Visitor Economy & Culture Delivery Programme, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report by the Executive Director of Place.

- 4) To agree to reallocate the remaining capital funds which had been earmarked for RPF project delivery to deliver Council-led projects which align with the UK SPF criteria and can be completed within the timescales required.
- 5) To agree to reallocate the remaining revenue funds which had been earmarked for RPF project delivery to boost existing projects delivering under Edinburgh's UK SPF programme.
- 6) To note that a report would be submitted to Committee in February 2024, further detailing recommendations for the spend of the reallocated funds.

- moved by Councillor Meagher, seconded by Councillor Pogson

#### **Amendment 1**

- 1) To note the six-month report provided to the UK Government and the progress made with UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) programme delivery in Edinburgh.
- 2) To note that the People and Skills projects which were allocated funding from the underspent 2022/23 Multiply allocation had commenced delivery.
- 3) To agree to allocate £130,415 on five projects under the Regional Prosperity Framework (RPF)'s Visitor Economy & Culture Delivery Programme, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report by the Executive Director of Place.
- 4) To agree to reallocate the remaining capital funds which had been earmarked for RPF project delivery to deliver Council-led projects which can be completed within the timescales required on projects related to net zero, climate adaptation and nature recovery in recognition of the fact that these are unfunded capital priorities as outlined in the Sustainable Capital Budget update paper at Finance and Resources committee on 21st November 2023, that becoming a Net Zero City by 2030 is a key aim of the Council Business Plan and that these are cross-cutting themes within the UK SPF criteria. Also agrees that the additional update report mentioned at 1.1.6 will clearly outline how the projects selected for this spending deliver against the various workplans / strategies which fall under the remit of the Net Zero Edinburgh Leadership Board.
- 5) To agree to reallocate the remaining revenue funds which had been earmarked for RPF project delivery to boost existing projects delivering under Edinburgh's UK SPF programme.
- 6) To note that a report would be submitted to Committee in February 2024, further detailing recommendations for the spend of the reallocated funds.

- moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Rae

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13), Amendment 1 was adjusted and 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 Bruce, seconded by Councillor Munro

### **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, Parker, Pogson and Rae.

For Amendment 2: Councillors Bruce and Munro)

### **Decision**

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Meagher:

- 1) To note the six-month report provided to the UK Government and the progress made with UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) programme delivery in Edinburgh.
- 2) To note that the People and Skills projects which were allocated funding from the underspent 2022/23 Multiply allocation had commenced delivery.
- 3) To agree to allocate £130,415 on five projects under the Regional Prosperity Framework (RPF)'s Visitor Economy & Culture Delivery Programme, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report by the Executive Director of Place.
- 4) To agree to reallocate the remaining capital funds which had been earmarked for RPF project delivery in the first instance to deliver Council-led projects which could be completed within the timescales required on projects related to net zero, climate adaptation and nature recovery in recognition of the fact that these were unfunded capital priorities as outlined in the Sustainable Capital Budget update paper at Finance and Resources committee on 21st November 2023, that becoming a Net Zero City by 2030 was a key aim of the Council Business Plan and that these were cross-cutting themes within the UK SPF criteria. To also agree that the additional update report mentioned at 1.1.6 of the report by the Executive Director of Place would clearly outline how the projects selected for this spending delivered against the various workplans / strategies which fell under the remit of the Net Zero Edinburgh Leadership Board.
- 5) To agree to reallocate the remaining revenue funds which had been earmarked for RPF project delivery to boost existing projects delivering under Edinburgh's UK SPF programme.
- 6) To note that a report would be submitted to Committee in February 2024, further detailing recommendations for the spend of the reallocated funds.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 4 August 2022 (item 6), 1 December 2022 (item 11) and 8 August 2023 (item 9); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

## 9. Edinburgh Fair Work Charter

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An update was provided on progress in developing an Edinburgh Fair Work Charter, and a proposed timescale and approach for further engagement, design, and implementation.

### **Motion**

To agree the planned work programme for development of a city-wide Edinburgh Fair Work Charter.

- moved by Councillor Meagher, seconded by Councillor Pogson

### **Amendment 1**

- 1) To agree the planned work programme for development of a city-wide Edinburgh Fair Work Charter with the following adjustments:
  - in the “Achieving” status level of the “Real Living Wage” section under “Fair Pay” specify that apprentices should also be paid a Real Living Wage for businesses to be considered “Achieving” in this category
  - in the ‘Inclusivity’ section include actions relating to specific support for unpaid carers
- 2) To request that the ‘scoping and engagement’ phase of the timescale includes engagement with third sector and voluntary organisations working on employment and employability for women, disabled people, Black and minority ethnic people, care leavers, unpaid carers and other marginalised groups.

- moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Rae

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**

- 1) To agree the planned work programme for development of a city-wide Edinburgh Fair Work Charter.
- 2) To request that the ‘scoping and engagement’ phase of the timescale includes engagement with third sector and voluntary organisations working on employment and employability for women, disabled people, Black and minority ethnic people, care leavers, unpaid carers and other marginalised groups.

- moved by Councillor Bruce, seconded by Councillor Munro

### **Voting**

The voting was as follows:

For the motion	-	9 votes
For Amendment	-	2 votes

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

For Amendment 2: Councillors Bruce and Munro.)

### **Decision**

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Meagher:

- 1) To agree the planned work programme for development of a city-wide Edinburgh Fair Work Charter with the following adjustments:
  - in the “Achieving” status level of the “Real Living Wage” section under “Fair Pay” specify that apprentices should also be paid a Real Living Wage for businesses to be considered “Achieving” in this category
  - in the ‘Inclusivity’ section include actions relating to specific support for unpaid carers
- 2) To request that the ‘scoping and engagement’ phase of the timescale includes engagement with third sector and voluntary organisations working on employment and employability for women, disabled people, Black and minority ethnic people, care leavers, unpaid carers and other marginalised groups.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 8 August 2023 (item 12); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

## **10. Housing and Homelessness and Business Growth and Inclusion: Revenue Budget Monitoring 2023/24 – Month Five position**

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A summary of the 2023/24-month five revenue forecast for Housing and Homelessness, Business Growth and Inclusion and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was presented. The projected Council-wide General Fund revenue budget position, based on month five, was reported to the Finance and Resources Committee on 21 November 2023. The Homelessness and Housing general fund services month five forecast was provided as an overspend of £1.10m, and a reduction of £0.25m from the forecast of £1.35m reported at month three.

### **Decision**

- 1) To note the Place service area, which included Housing and Homelessness, Culture and Wellbeing, Sustainable Development and Operational Services, was forecasting a pressure of £0.71m, as at month five, which was a reduction of £1.24m from the £1.95m forecast at month three.
- 2) To note that Housing and Homelessness was forecasting a budget pressure, as at month five, of £1.10m which was a reduction of £0.25m from the £1.35m forecast at month three.
- 3) To note that Business Growth and Inclusion was forecasting an underspend, as at month five, of £0.46m which was an increase of £0.06m from the £0.40m underspend forecast at month three.
- 4) To note the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was forecasting a contribution of £2.724m to the Strategic Housing Investment Fund (SHIF) from revenue generated in 2023/24,

a reduction of £1.596m from the position reported at month three. This was a £4.254m shortfall against the budgeted contribution.

- 5) To note that measures would continue to be progressed to offset budget pressures and to deliver approved savings targets to achieve outturn expenditure and income in line with the approved General Fund revenue budget for 2023/24.
- 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 contribution to the SHIF.
- 7) To note the need for all existing pressures, savings delivery shortfalls and risks to be fully and proactively managed within Directorates.
- 8) To note updates would continue to be provided to members of the Committee during the remainder of the year.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 3 October 2023 (item 8); Finance and Resources Committee, 23 October 2023 (item 3) and 21 November 2023 (item 5); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

## **11. Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2024-29**

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A potential development programme of around 11,000 new affordable homes over a five-year period was identified, with over 9,500 of these requiring grant funding through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP). These would require an additional £665 million over five years, almost four times the amount of grant funding set out in current resource planning assumptions. An estimate, rather than a target, was provided of potential approvals and completions, along with the challenges faced in delivering a pipeline of affordable homes during a period of economic instability; the continued impact that construction industry capacity, construction materials availability and increased costs, availability of grant funding and borrowing capacity of affordable developers (linked to rental income) which would have an impact on the deliverability of the programme.

### **Motion**

- 1) To approve the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2024-29 for submission to the Scottish Government.
- 2) To note the SHIP includes over 9,500 homes that would require grant funding through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP). These would require an additional £665 million over five years, almost four times the amount of grant funding set out in current resource planning assumptions.
- 3) To note the key challenges to delivering affordable housing at scale are securing control of sites, availability of grant funding, borrowing capacity of affordable developers (linked to rental income), high development cost, construction industry capacity and reduced private sector housebuilding due to mortgage market instability.

- 4) To note that the SHIP is reviewed annually, and officers will continue to seek opportunities to accelerate delivery of affordable housing and secure more grant funding.
- 5) To agree to discharge the action agreed at Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on 8 August 2023 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report by the Executive Director of Place.
- 6) To agree to approach COSLA regarding the Transfer of Management Development Fund (TMDF) funding to discuss a proportionate allocation of the funding available.
- 7) To note that officers will continue discussions with the Scottish Government over increased and innovative funding opportunities to instil confidence in the market and increase the completion rate for approved homes.

- moved by Councillor Meagher, seconded by Councillor Pogson

### **Amendment 1**

- 1) To approve the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2024-29 for submission to the Scottish Government.
- 2) To note the SHIP includes over 9,500 homes that would require grant funding through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP). These would require an additional £665 million over five years, almost four times the amount of grant funding set out in current resource planning assumptions.
- 3) To note the key challenges to delivering affordable housing at scale are securing control of sites, availability of grant funding, borrowing capacity of affordable developers (linked to rental income), high development cost, construction industry capacity and reduced private sector housebuilding due to mortgage market instability.
- 4) To note that the SHIP is reviewed annually, and officers will continue to seek opportunities to accelerate delivery of affordable housing and secure more grant funding.
- 5) To agree to discharge the action agreed at Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on 8 August 2023 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report by the Executive Director of Place.
- 6) To agree to approach COSLA regarding the Transfer of Management Development Fund (TMDF) funding to discuss a proportionate allocation of the funding available.
- 7) To note that officers will continue discussions with the Scottish Government over increased and innovative funding opportunities to instil confidence in the market and increase the completion rate for approved homes.
- 8) Notes the excellent work and success rate of the Empty Homes Officer detailed in Appendix 4 of the report by the Executive Director of Place.

- 9) Calls for a report within one cycle exploring the benefits and costs of increasing the size of the Empty Homes Team e.g. in Glasgow there are 4 Empty Homes Officers as opposed to 1 in Edinburgh.

- moved by Councillor Key, seconded by Councillor Dobbin

### **Amendment 2**

- 1) To approve the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2024-29 for submission to the Scottish Government.
- 2) To note the SHIP includes over 9,500 homes that would require grant funding through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP). These would require an additional £665 million over five years, almost four times the amount of grant funding set out in current resource planning assumptions.
- 3) To note the key challenges to delivering affordable housing at scale are securing control of sites, availability of grant funding, borrowing capacity of affordable developers (linked to rental income), high development cost, construction industry capacity and reduced private sector housebuilding due to mortgage market instability.
- 4) To note that the SHIP is reviewed annually, and officers will continue to seek opportunities to accelerate delivery of affordable housing and secure more grant funding.
- 5) To agree to discharge the action agreed at Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on 8 August 2023 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report by the Executive Director of Place.
- 6) To agree to approach COSLA regarding the Transfer of Management Development Fund (TMDF) funding to discuss a proportionate allocation of the funding available.
- 7) To note that officers will continue discussions with the Scottish Government over increased and innovative funding opportunities to instil confidence in the market and increase the completion rate for approved homes.
- 8) Requests quarterly pipeline approvals and completions in table format (similar to the table in 4.1.4 Table 2 of this report) on the Business Bulletin, to allow committee to track realistic progress.
- 9) Notes the estimations on Item 2.9 of the SHIP report and requests committee receives updated impact going forward after the induction of the Short Term Let Control Area.

- moved by Councillor Flannery, seconded by Councillor Caldwell

### **Amendment 3**

- 1) To approve the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2024-29 for submission to the Scottish Government.
- 2) To note the SHIP includes over 9,500 homes that would require grant funding through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP). These would

require an additional £665 million over five years, almost four times the amount of grant funding set out in current resource planning assumptions.

- 3) To note the key challenges to delivering affordable housing at scale are securing control of sites, availability of grant funding, borrowing capacity of affordable developers (linked to rental income), high development cost, construction industry capacity and reduced private sector housebuilding due to mortgage market instability.
- 4) To note that the SHIP is reviewed annually, and officers will continue to seek opportunities to accelerate delivery of affordable housing and secure more grant funding.
- 5) To agree to discharge the action agreed at Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on 8 August 2023 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report by the Executive Director of Place.
- 6) To agree to approach COSLA regarding the Transfer of Management Development Fund (TMDF) funding to discuss a proportionate allocation of the funding available.
- 7) To note that officers will continue discussions with the Scottish Government over increased and innovative funding opportunities to instil confidence in the market and increase the completion rate for approved homes.
- 8) Notes from the report that:

“On 2 November 2023 Council declared a Housing [Emergency] due to the acute nature of Edinburgh’s homelessness crisis, coupled with the severe shortage of social rented homes ...” (3.5, p4)

“Edinburgh has one of the lowest proportions of social housing in Scotland with only 13% of homes for social rent compared to the national average of 22%” (Appendix 4, 2.3)

“The majority of the AHSP approvals are for social rent (63%), with most of the remaining homes being for mid-market rent” (Appendix 4, 4.8)

The Scottish Government’s target is for 70% of approvals to be social rent (Appendix 4, 4.8)
- 9) Considers that, in the context of the declaration of a Housing Emergency which recognises the severe shortage of social rented homes as a critical factor, and of being a local authority with one of the lowest percentages of social rented homes in Scotland, an investment plan which fails to meet the Scottish Government target of 70% approvals for social rent is not sufficiently radical and that the Council should instead be pursuing an investment plan which delivers above and beyond that target to remedy the historical underinvestment in social rented homes in the city and achieve parity with other local authorities.
- 10) Notes that the investment plan does not consider alternative housing models such as housing co-operatives, “modular” homes or co-housing arrangements

which can provide better quality housing at more affordable rents and should be part of the solution to the Housing Emergency.

- 11) Notes that the Council will be developing a Housing Emergency Action Plan and agrees that this process should address the points above such that future iterations of the SHIP greater prioritise investment in social rented homes and alternative housing models.
- 12) Considers that the Emergency Action Plan should further interrogate funding sources for the SHIP, for example by exploring preventative spend projects within health and social care, climate, or economic development where housing has a key role to play in achieving objectives and where additional, external investment from other funds might be appropriate.

- moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Rae

In accordance with Standing Order 22(13) Amendments 1, 2 and 3 were accepted as addendums to the Motion.

### **Decision**

- 1) To approve the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2024-29 for submission to the Scottish Government.
- 2) To note the SHIP included over 9,500 homes that would require grant funding through the Affordable Housing Supply Programme (AHSP). These would require an additional £665 million over five years, almost four times the amount of grant funding set out in current resource planning assumptions.
- 3) To note the key challenges to delivering affordable housing at scale would be securing control of sites, availability of grant funding, borrowing capacity of affordable developers (linked to rental income), high development cost, construction industry capacity and reduced private sector housebuilding due to mortgage market instability.
- 4) To note that the SHIP would be reviewed annually, and officers would continue to seek opportunities to accelerate delivery of affordable housing and secure more grant funding.
- 5) To agree to discharge the action agreed at Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on 8 August 2023 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report by the Executive Director of Place.
- 6) To agree to approach COSLA regarding the Transfer of Management Development Fund (TMDF) funding to discuss a proportionate allocation of the funding available.
- 7) To note that officers would continue discussions with the Scottish Government over increased and innovative funding opportunities to instil confidence in the market and increase the completion rate for approved homes.
- 8) To note the excellent work and success rate of the Empty Homes Officer detailed in Appendix 4 of the report by the Executive Director of Place.

- 9) To call for a report within one cycle exploring the benefits and costs of increasing the size of the Empty Homes Team e.g. in Glasgow there were 4 Empty Homes Officers as opposed to 1 in Edinburgh.
- 10) To request quarterly pipeline approvals and completions in table format (similar to the table in 4.1.4 Table 2 of the report by the Executive Director of Place) on the Business Bulletin, to allow committee to track realistic progress.
- 11) To note the estimations on Item 2.9 of the report by the Executive Director of Place and to request committee would receive updated impact going forward after the induction of the Short Term Let Control Area.
- 12) To note from the report that:
 

“On 2 November 2023 Council declared a Housing [Emergency] due to the acute nature of Edinburgh’s homelessness crisis, coupled with the severe shortage of social rented homes ...” (3.5, p4)

“Edinburgh has one of the lowest proportions of social housing in Scotland with only 13% of homes for social rent compared to the national average of 22%” (Appendix 4, 2.3)

“The majority of the AHSP approvals are for social rent (63%), with most of the remaining homes being for mid-market rent” (Appendix 4, 4.8)

The Scottish Government’s target is for 70% of approvals to be social rent (Appendix 4, 4.8)
- 13) To consider that, in the context of the declaration of a Housing Emergency which recognised the severe shortage of social rented homes as a critical factor, and of being a local authority with one of the lowest percentages of social rented homes in Scotland, an investment plan which failed to meet the Scottish Government target of 70% approvals for social rent was not sufficiently radical and that the Council should instead be pursuing an investment plan which delivered above and beyond that target to remedy the historical underinvestment in social rented homes in the city and achieve parity with other local authorities.
- 14) To note that the investment plan did not consider alternative housing models such as housing co-operatives, “modular” homes or co-housing arrangements which could provide better quality housing at more affordable rents and should be part of the solution to the Housing Emergency.
- 15) To note that the Council would be developing a Housing Emergency Action Plan and to agree that this process should address the points above such that future iterations of the SHIP would greater prioritise investment in social rented homes and alternative housing models.
- 16) To consider that the Emergency Action Plan should further interrogate funding sources for the SHIP, for example by exploring preventative spend projects within health and social care, climate, or economic development where housing had a key role to play in achieving objectives and where additional, external investment from other funds might be appropriate.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 1 December 2022 (item 9) and 8 August 2023 (item 16); Planning Committee, 14 June 2023 (item 3); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

## 12. Housing Emergency Action Plan

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High-level actions were proposed in response to the Council's declaration of a housing emergency on 2 November 2023. These actions were Council wide, covering housing management practice, homelessness prevention, housebuilding and purchase, funding, social care and children's services. The action plan would be developed into a programme plan for delivery and presented to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on 27 February 2024, with financial projections factored into the Council's budget process.

### Motion

- 1) To note that, on 2 November 2023, the Council agreed to declare a Housing Emergency.
- 2) To note the draft Council wide action plan outlined in Appendix 1 of the report by the Executive of Place.
- 3) To agree that these actions should form the basis of a programme plan that will be developed and presented to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on the 27 February 2024.
- 4) To note that meetings have been held with partner agencies including Registered Social Landlords, SHAPE, Shelter and Cyrenians to agree a partnership response to the housing emergency.
- 5) To note that financial projections based on these actions will be presented to Finance and Resources Committee on the 6 February 2024 to inform the Council's budget setting process.
- 6) To agree to refer this report to the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board and to Education, Children and Families Committee for further discussion and debate.

- moved by Councillor Meagher, seconded by Councillor Pogson

### Amendment 1

- 1) To note that, on 2 November 2023, the Council agreed to declare a Housing Emergency.
- 2) To note the draft Council wide action plan outlined in Appendix 1 of the report by the Executive of Place.
- 3) To agree that these actions should form the basis of a programme plan that will be developed and presented to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on the 27 February 2024.
- 4) To note that meetings have been held with partner agencies including Registered Social Landlords, SHAPE, Shelter and Cyrenians to agree a partnership response to the housing emergency.

- 5) To note that financial projections based on these actions will be presented to Finance and Resources Committee on the 6 February 2024 to inform the Council's budget setting process.
- 6) To agree to refer this report to the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board and to Education, Children and Families Committee for further discussion and debate.
- 7) Requests the Service Director, Housing and Homelessness, continues to explore all further options to resolve the housing emergency and requests the 'cyclical updates' are present on May 2024 and August 2024 Business Bulletins respectively and the Homelessness Action Plan is annually scheduled as routine for scrutiny.
- 8) Requests the May 2024 Business Bulletin update (as above) or a 'Void Turnaround Improvement Strategy' report (as determined suitable) includes the feasibility of 're-decoration vouchers' for properties where repairs / re-decoration are the primary barrier to allowing Lets of Void properties (supporting Action Area 1.).
- 9) Requests the following action areas are appended to the draft Housing Emergency Action Plan:
  - Adds Action Area 26. "Ensure there is dedicated resource to liaise across Lothian council areas, when appropriate, to develop a strategic housing partnership across the City of Edinburgh Council, Midlothian Council, East Lothian Council, and West Lothian Council."
  - Adds Action Area 27. "Ensure parity, where legislatively possible, between Planning and Housing departments and committees, and increase opportunities for departments and committees to co-ordinate to meet Housing Supply Targets in LDP 2016 and City Plan 2030 respectively."
  - Adds Action Area 28. "Guarantee action areas 1., 14., 16., 17. and 18. prioritise the dignity and wellbeing of residents above all quotas, targets and figures, and recognises the critical work officers currently do to ensure these values are upheld in all transactions."
- 10) Requests the final action plan is broken down by practical steps that can be taken now and aspirational actions that require substantial additional capital.

- moved by Councillor Caldwell, seconded by Councillor Flannery

## **Amendment 2**

- 1) To note that, on 2 November 2023, the Council agreed to declare a Housing Emergency.
- 2) Notes that Council agreed that the "structure and reporting schedule of this additional Plan will be discussed in a workshop environment with the Housing, Homelessness & Fair Work committee", and that the plan would take "a human rights-based approach to future work".
- 3) Notes that Housing, Homelessness & Fair Work committee has not been involved in the development of the draft plan, and that this report fails to include

an IIA which would be a helpful way of ensuring that a human rights-based approach is taken to this work.

- 4) Looks forward to engaging with officers and relevant stakeholders, including those with lived experience of the impact of the housing emergency, to develop the plan.

- moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Rae

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

### **Decision**

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Meagher:

- 1) To note that, on 2 November 2023, the Council agreed to declare a Housing Emergency.
- 2) To note the draft Council wide action plan outlined in Appendix 1 of the report by the Executive of Place.
- 3) To agree that these actions should form the basis of a programme plan that would be developed and presented to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on the 27 February 2024.
- 4) To note that meetings had been held with partner agencies including Registered Social Landlords, SHAPE, Shelter and Cyrenians to agree a partnership response to the housing emergency.
- 5) To note that financial projections based on these actions would be presented to Finance and Resources Committee on the 6 February 2024 to inform the Council's budget setting process.
- 6) To agree to refer this report to the Edinburgh Integration Joint Board and to Education, Children and Families Committee for further discussion and debate.
- 7) To request the Service Director, Housing and Homelessness, would continue to explore all further options to resolve the housing emergency and to request the 'cyclical updates' would be present on May 2024 and August 2024 Business Bulletins respectively and the Homelessness Action Plan would be annually scheduled as routine for scrutiny.
- 8) To request the May 2024 Business Bulletin update (as above) or a 'Void Turnaround Improvement Strategy' report (as determined suitable) would include the feasibility of 're-decoration vouchers' for properties where repairs / re-decoration were the primary barrier to allowing Lets of Void properties (supporting Action Area 1.).
- 9) To request the following action areas be appended to the draft Housing Emergency Action Plan:
  - Adds Action Area 26: "Ensure there was dedicated resource to liaise across Lothian council areas, when appropriate, to develop a strategic housing

partnership across the City of Edinburgh Council, Midlothian Council, East Lothian Council, and West Lothian Council.”

- Adds Action Area 27: “Ensure parity, where legislatively possible, between Planning and Housing departments and committees, and increase opportunities for departments and committees to co-ordinate to meet Housing Supply Targets in LDP 2016 and City Plan 2030 respectively.”
  - Adds Action Area 28: “Guarantee action areas 1., 14., 16., 17. and 18. prioritise the dignity and wellbeing of residents above all quotas, targets and figures, and recognised the critical work officers currently do to ensure these values were upheld in all transactions.”
- 10) To request the final action plan be broken down by practical steps that could be taken now and aspirational actions that would require substantial additional capital.
  - 11) To note that Council agreed that the “structure and reporting schedule of this additional Plan will be discussed in a workshop environment with the Housing, Homelessness & Fair Work committee”, and that the plan would take “a human rights-based approach to future work”.
  - 12) To note that Housing, Homelessness & Fair Work committee had not been involved in the development of the draft plan, and that this report had yet to include an IIA which would be a helpful way of ensuring that a human rights-based approach be taken to this work.
  - 13) To look forward to engaging with officers and relevant stakeholders, including those with lived experience of the impact of the housing emergency, to develop the plan.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 3 October 2023 (item 16); Act of Council No. 14 of 2 November 2023; report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

### **13. Strategy for purchasing land and homes to meet affordable housing need**

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Progress with Council’s Housing Land Delivery Strategy was reviewed as agreed by Committee in December 2022. The strategy was renamed the ‘Strategy for purchasing land and homes to meet affordable housing need’. The strategy focused on increasing affordable housing supply by four routes – building directly, working on strategic sites with development partners, purchasing completed new build homes, and purchasing second hand homes. It had allowed the Council to identify and secure numerous opportunities to increase supply, although there was considerable pressure on the funding available to move forward with any of these opportunities, particularly new build development where construction costs were exceptionally high.

#### **Motion**

- 1) To note the progress made towards delivering the strategy to increase land and housing supply agreed by this Committee in December 2022.

- 2) To note that the strategy for the coming year will continue to focus on seeking land opportunities for building directly, purchase suitable completed new build homes from the private sector and work with landowners on partnering opportunities on strategic sites.
- 3) To note that approval would be sought from Finance and Resources Committee for bulk purchase of homes or sites with progress reported to this Committee via briefings and Business Bulletin updates.
- 4) To note that officers would also be seeking to accelerate purchase of second-hand homes aligned to our asset management strategy. Delegated authority was in place for the Executive Director of Place to purchase homes up to £250,000 per property.

- moved by Councillor Meagher, seconded by Councillor Pogson

### **Amendment 1**

- 1) To note the progress made towards delivering the strategy to increase land and housing supply agreed by this Committee in December 2022.
- 2) To note that the strategy for the coming year will continue to focus on seeking land opportunities for building directly, purchase suitable completed new build homes from the private sector and work with landowners on partnering opportunities on strategic sites.
- 3) To note that approval would be sought from Finance and Resources Committee for bulk purchase of homes or sites with progress reported to this Committee via briefings and Business Bulletin updates.
- 4) To note that officers would also be seeking to accelerate purchase of second-hand homes aligned to our asset management strategy. Delegated authority was in place for the Executive Director of Place to purchase homes up to £250,000 per property.
- 5) Notes that the council has powers to compulsorily purchase properties such as long-term empty homes but that the council does not use these powers due to a lack of suitable budget.
- 6) Therefore agrees to receive an update report within three cycles on the feasibility of using CPO powers to bring long-term empty homes back into use and retaining those which align with the council's asset management strategy and disposing of those which do not.

- moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Rae

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 approve the motion as originally submitted by Councillor Meagher.

- moved by Councillor Bruce, seconded by Councillor Munro

## 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, Parker, Pogson and Rae.

For Amendment 2: Councillors Bruce, Caldwell, Flannery and Munro)

## Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Meagher:

- 1) To note the progress made towards delivering the strategy to increase land and housing supply agreed by this Committee in December 2022.
- 2) To note that the strategy for the coming year would continue to focus on seeking land opportunities for building directly, purchase suitable completed new build homes from the private sector and work with landowners on partnering opportunities on strategic sites.
- 3) To note that approval would be sought from Finance and Resources Committee for bulk purchase of homes or sites with progress reported to this Committee via briefings and Business Bulletin updates.
- 4) To note that officers would also be seeking to accelerate purchase of second-hand homes aligned to our asset management strategy. Delegated authority was in place for the Executive Director of Place to purchase homes up to £250,000 per property.
- 5) To note that the council had powers to compulsorily purchase properties such as long-term empty homes but that the council did not use these powers due to a lack of suitable budget.
- 6) To agree to receive an update report within three cycles on the feasibility of using CPO powers to bring long-term empty homes back into use and retaining those which align with the council's asset management strategy and disposing of those which did not.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 1 December 2022 (item 19); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

## 14. Waste and Cleansing Services on Housing Land

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Details were provided of the range of services provided by Waste and Cleansing on the Council's housing estates, in response to a Motion to Committee on 9 May 2023 by Councillor Campbell.

**Decision** To note the report by the Executive Director of Place.

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 9 May 2023 (item 12); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

## 15. Tenant Participation and Community Engagement 2024/2027

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An update on tenant participation activities in 2023/24 was provided highlighting the development of a new Tenant Participation Strategy (TPS) and agreement of funding for Edinburgh Tenants' Federation (ETF) for a further two years from 1 April 2024 - 31 March 2026 to support tenant participation and engagement. Details were also provided information on the future work of the Neighbourhood Alliance and approval was sought for 12 months' funding to support tenant participation, community engagement and placemaking initiatives.

### Motion

- 1) To agree to fund Edinburgh Tenants' Federation (ETF) for a further two years to 31 March 2026, on a maximum standstill budget of £241,083 per annum.
- 2) To agree to fund the Neighbourhood Alliance from one year to March 2025 on a maximum standstill budget of £70,940.

- moved by Councillor Meagher, seconded by Councillor Pogson

### Amendment 1

- 1) Recognises that funding to support tenant participation and community engagement is of vital importance.
- 2) Notes that Councillors have been asked to agree spending of over £550k of public money without:
  - a) oversight of the SLA which governs the contract;
  - b) a RAG status update (or similar) against the KPIs contained within the SLA;
  - c) explanation of how the proposed spend delivers value for money in the context of other local authorities delivering a similar service differently and at lower cost.
- 3) Considers that for Councillors to approve spending without this information falls short of the level of scrutiny the public expect from Elected Members and is poor governance.
- 4) Therefore, requests that officers engage with political groups to share the above in advance of the next tranche of funding being awarded to ETF.

- moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Rae

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 approve the motion as originally submitted by Councillor Meagher.

- moved by Councillor Caldwell, seconded by Councillor Flannery

At this point in the meeting, Amendment 2 was withdrawn.

## Decision

To approve the following adjusted motion by Councillor Meagher:

- 1) To agree to fund Edinburgh Tenants' Federation (ETF) for a further two years to 31 March 2026, on a maximum standstill budget of £241,083 per annum.
- 2) To agree to fund the Neighbourhood Alliance from one year to March 2025 on a maximum standstill budget of £70,940.
- 3) To recognise that funding to support tenant participation and community engagement was of vital importance.
- 4) To note that Councillors had been asked to agree spending of over £550k of public money without:
  - a) oversight of the SLA which governs the contract;
  - b) a RAG status update (or similar) against the KPIs contained within the SLA;
  - c) explanation of how the proposed spend delivered value for money in the context of other local authorities delivering a similar service differently and at lower cost.
- 5) To consider that for Councillors to approve spending without this information fell short of the level of scrutiny the public expect from Elected Members and was poor governance.
- 6) Therefore, to request that officers engage with political groups to share the above in advance of the next tranche of funding being awarded to ETF,

(References – Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, 20 January 2020 (item 7); report by the Executive Director of Place, submitted.)

## 16. Affordable Housing Commuted Sums – referral from the Planning Committee

---

On 15 November 2023, the Planning Committee considered a report which provided an update on commuted sums being used in lieu of onsite affordable housing and how they were used to build affordable homes in Edinburgh. This was referred to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee for information.

### Motion

To note the report by the Executive Director of Place.

- moved by Councillor Meagher, seconded by Councillor Pogson

### Amendment

- 1) Notes that the Council recently declared a Housing Emergency.
- 2) Notes the Planning Committee decision at paragraph 5 of the referral report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services to receive a report in Autumn 2024.
- 3) Given the Housing Emergency and need to develop an Emergency Action Plan, agrees that this Committee will receive a briefing note on this subject as soon as possible.

- moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Rae

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 note the report by the Executive Director of Place.
- 2) To note that the Council recently declared a Housing Emergency.
- 3) To note the Planning Committee decision at paragraph 5 of the referral report by the Executive Director of Corporate Services to receive a report in Autumn 2024.
- 4) To agree, given the Housing Emergency and need to develop an Emergency Action Plan, that this Committee would receive a briefing note on this subject as soon as possible.

(References – Planning Committee, 15 November 2023 (item 6), referral from the Planning Committee, submitted.)

## **17. The EDI Group – annual update for the year ending 31 December 2022**

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An update was provided on the progress of the transition strategy for The EDI Group Limited, which aimed to close it and its subsidiary companies.

### **Decision**

- 1) To note the report by the Executive Director of Place.
- 2) To refer the report to the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee.

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

## **18. By Councillor Caldwell - EdIndex during the Housing Emergency**

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

“Committee Notes:

1. That Edinburgh Council and Housing Associations run EdIndex as a single portal to try and match residents with social-rent properties, with over 24,000 registered applicants (RRTP Aug 23).
2. EdIndex utilises a points-based system and bidding to match residents to potential homes, and notes that FY22/23 saw 185 average bids per property (EPC Oct 23).
3. That Edinburgh Council declared a Housing Emergency on 2nd November 2023 which requested progress monitoring and further partnership working with RSLs.

Requests:

4. A report in three cycles which outlines:
  - a) Key statistics from EdIndex over FY 23/24, including:
    - a. number of applicants registered on EdIndex.
    - b. total number of successful and unsuccessful bids in the FY.
    - c. average number of days applicants on different priority tiers.
  - b) A full list of partner organisations who are associated with EdIndex and the benefits that EdIndex partners, including the Council, receive.
  - c) What alternative systems comparable local authorities use.
  - d) A general summation of feedback from applicants over the last year and any relevant mechanisms/proposals to collect feedback from unsuccessful and successful applicants and third sector partners, as well as any proposals to maximise social equity in the system in the context of the Housing Emergency.
5. The information requested in 4. a, b, and c is appended to the annual 'Edinburgh in Numbers' report to ensure transparent public monitoring during the Housing Emergency.
6. Prior to the publication of the above report, a meeting between any elected members, relevant Place Directorate officers and EdIndex Board members (who wish to participate) is arranged to better understand the successes and challenges around EdIndex in the context of Edinburgh's wider Housing Emergency declaration."

### **Motion**

To approve the motion by Councillor Caldwell.

- moved by Councillor Caldwell, seconded by Councillor Flannery

### **Amendment**

To add to the motion by Councillor Caldwell:

- 1) Notes that there are a number of challenges reported with using EdIndex related to digital exclusion and / or comprehension, felt most acutely by older adults and some disabled people, and requests that this report pays particular attention to these issues.
- 2) Recognises that individual, 1-1 support to help individuals to submit an EdIndex form is the best way of addressing this problem and that, whilst training has been put in place with some services within the Council to signpost people to the EdIndex site – for example, within the library service – proactive support for individual applicants to complete an EdIndex form is not currently offered.
- 3) Therefore requests that this report also covers detail on what resourcing could be put in place to trial a programme of application support – for example, via scheduled drop in sessions in libraries, community centres, or over the phone – with oversight of this programme given to the HART team, who already work closely with disabled applicants or those with additional support needs, to

ensure consistency in support for applicants from the point of application through to offer and post-offer support / tenancy sustainment, recognising that this is an important tenet of trauma informed working.

- moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Rae

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 Caldwell:

- 1) To note that Edinburgh Council and Housing Associations ran EdIndex as a single portal to try and match residents with social-rent properties, with over 24,000 registered applicants (RRTP Aug 23).
- 2) To note that EdIndex utilised a points-based system and bidding to match residents to potential homes, and to note that FY22/23 saw 185 average bids per property (EPC Oct 23).
- 3) To note that Edinburgh Council declared a Housing Emergency on 2nd November 2023 which requested progress monitoring and further partnership working with RSLs.
- 4) To request a report in three cycles which outlined:
  - a) Key statistics from EdIndex over FY 23/24, including:
    - a. number of applicants registered on EdIndex.
    - b. total number of successful and unsuccessful bids in the FY.
    - c. average number of days applicants on different priority tiers.
  - b) A full list of partner organisations who were associated with EdIndex and the benefits that EdIndex partners, including the Council, received.
  - c) What alternative systems comparable local authorities used.
  - d) A general summation of feedback from applicants over the last year and any relevant mechanisms/proposals to collect feedback from unsuccessful and successful applicants and third sector partners, as well as any proposals to maximise social equity in the system in the context of the Housing Emergency.
- 5) To request the information requested in 4. a, b, and c be appended to the annual 'Edinburgh in Numbers' report to ensure transparent public monitoring during the Housing Emergency.
- 6) To request prior to the publication of the above report, a meeting between any elected members, relevant Place Directorate officers and EdIndex Board members (who wish to participate) be arranged to better understand the successes and challenges around EdIndex in the context of Edinburgh's wider Housing Emergency declaration.
- 7) To note that there were a number of challenges reported with using EdIndex related to digital exclusion and / or comprehension, felt most acutely by older

adults and some disabled people, and request that this report paid particular attention to these issues.

- 8) To recognise that individual, 1-1 support to help individuals to submit an EdIndex form was the best way of addressing this problem and that, whilst training had been put in place with some services within the Council to signpost people to the EdIndex site – for example, within the library service – proactive support for individual applicants to complete an EdIndex form was not currently offered.
- 9) Therefore, to request that this report would also cover detail on what resourcing could be put in place to trial a programme of application support – for example, via scheduled drop in sessions in libraries, community centres, or over the phone – with oversight of this programme given to the HART team, who already worked closely with disabled applicants or those with additional support needs, to ensure consistency in support for applicants from the point of application through to offer and post-offer support / tenancy sustainment, recognising that this was an important tenet of trauma informed working.

### **Declaration of interests**

Councillor Parker made a transparency statement in respect of the above item as an associate with Housing Options Scotland (in this work, Councillor Parker had worked with disabled people and older adults on housing application processes).

## **19. By Councillor Hyslop – Discretionary Housing Payments**

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

- 1) Notes that Councillors were informed of funding pressures affecting Discretionary Housing Payments through a briefing note circulated on 1 November.
- 2) Notes that DHPs which are awarded to mitigate the effects of the Bedroom Tax and the Benefit Cap will not be affected.
- 3) Notes that the Edinburgh is one of the few authorities who make awards for DHP for citizens looking to move to more appropriate/affordable accommodation to support with rent in advance, deposits and removals.
- 4) Notes with concern that pressures outlined in the briefing note and the decision to cut back on these supports means that the council will be less able to support one off funding awards to support citizens to stay in their tenancies and avoid homelessness.
- 5) Believes that decisions taken with the aim of saving money to reduce funding pressures, which subsequently lead to an increase in homelessness are unlikely to achieve their aim and will potentially lead to a higher cost for the Council and significantly worse outcomes for residents.
- 6) Requests a report to HHFW Committee within 2 cycles with an update to committee which outlines the potential for an increase in homelessness and

associated costs to the council if DHP's are withdrawn as set out in the briefing note.”

### **Motion**

To approve motion by Councillor Hyslop.

- moved by Councillor Hyslop, seconded by Councillor Flannery

### **Amendment 1**

To add to the motion by Councillor Hyslop:

Requests this report seeks input from the Accessible Housing Sounding Board.

- moved by Councillor Caldwell, seconded by Councillor Flannery

### **Amendment 2**

To add to the motion by Councillor Hyslop:

- 1) Notes that DHP has the particular policy intention of helping people on a meanwhile basis to access more appropriate / affordable accommodation, but that this is a challenge in Edinburgh where rents are hugely inflated.
- 2) Notes that other benefits and funds are available relating to addressing pressures on housing / homelessness prevention, for example the Tenant Grant Fund and Tenant Hardship Fund. Also notes that other funds exist which support tenancy sustainment such as the School Clothing Grant and Scottish Welfare Fund.
- 3) Requests that this report also includes an outline of funds in addition to DHP whose general objectives are to prevent homelessness / support tenancy sustainment, outline the nuances of the policy intentions behind each of these funds, the different criteria attached to them (for example, which funds are eligible for benefit recipients vs non benefit recipients) and the funding streams for them, all with a view to setting out if there are additional considerations which ought to be made when reviewing funding needs for DHP going forward.

- moved by Councillor Parker, seconded by Councillor Rae

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 Hyslop:

- 1) To note that Councillors were informed of funding pressures affecting Discretionary Housing Payments through a briefing note circulated on 1 November.
- 2) To note that DHPs which were awarded to mitigate the effects of the Bedroom Tax and the Benefit Cap would not be affected.

- 3) To note that the Edinburgh was one of the few authorities who made awards for DHP for citizens looking to move to more appropriate/affordable accommodation to support with rent in advance, deposits and removals.
- 4) To note with concern that pressures outlined in the briefing note and the decision to cut back on these supports meant that the council would be less able to support one off funding awards to support citizens to stay in their tenancies and avoid homelessness.
- 5) To believe that decisions taken with the aim of saving money to reduce funding pressures, which subsequently led to an increase in homelessness were unlikely to achieve their aim and would potentially lead to a higher cost for the Council and significantly worse outcomes for residents.
- 6) To request a report to HHFW Committee within 2 cycles with an update to committee outlining the potential for an increase in homelessness and associated costs to the council if DHP's were withdrawn as set out in the briefing note.
- 7) To request this report would seek input from the Accessible Housing Sounding Board.
- 8) To note that DHP has the particular policy intention of helping people on a meanwhile basis to access more appropriate / affordable accommodation, but that this was a challenge in Edinburgh where rents were hugely inflated.
- 9) To note that other benefits and funds were available relating to addressing pressures on housing / homelessness prevention, for example the Tenant Grant Fund and Tenant Hardship Fund. Also to note that other funds existed which supported tenancy sustainment such as the School Clothing Grant and Scottish Welfare Fund.
- 10) To request that this report would also include an outline of funds in addition to DHP whose general objectives are to prevent homelessness / support tenancy sustainment, outline the nuances of the policy intentions behind each of these funds, the different criteria attached to them (for example, which funds were eligible for benefit recipients vs non benefit recipients) and the funding streams for them, all with a view to setting out if there were additional considerations which ought to be made when reviewing funding needs for DHP going forward.