

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**HOUSING COMMITTEE****MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20 APRIL 2005 AT
1002 HRS IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS,
LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK**

PRESENT: Councillors Jimmy Kelly, Stephanie Young, Willie Coffey, Douglas Reid, Gordon Cree, John Weir, Drew McIntyre, Isabella Macrae, John Knapp, Jim Raymond, Stuart Finlayson, Eric Jackson, George Smith, Neil McGhee, Eric Ross, and Elaine Dinwoodie.

ATTENDING: Fiona Lees, Chief Executive; William Stafford, Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services; John Walker, Head of Building and Works; Chris McAleavey, Head of Housing; David McLellan, Financial Services Manager; Joe Cassidy, Policy Manager; Alan Paterson, Principal Quantity Surveyor; Anna Gallagher, Solicitor; and Stuart Nelson Administrative Officer.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Daniel Coffey, John Campbell, Tommy Farrell, William Menzies and Elaine Stewart.

CHAIR: Councillor Jimmy Kelly, Chair.

HOUSING STOCK OPTIONS APPRAISAL (Item 8, page 374, 03/07)

1. There was submitted a report dated 4 April 2005 (circulated) by the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services which informed of the outcome of the Housing Stock Options Appraisal recently carried out by DTZ Pieda, on behalf of the Council, and invited Members to consider the options as presented.

The Committee received a presentation on the Housing Stock Options Appraisal from Anna Evans of DTZ Pieda.

Following discussion, and consideration of the issues concerned, Councillor Kelly seconded by Councillor Cree moved:-

- (i) to recommend to Council the adoption of a strategy of whole stock retention, on the basis of careful management of such a strategy within the context of the Standard Delivery Plan and the application of a robust business planning approach to the delivery of the housing service involving action to mitigate the risks involved in retention including the following, all of which would be subject to regular review:-
 - Development of the Standard Delivery Plan to ensure delivery of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard;
 - Development of robust investment planning systems to ensure the Standard Delivery Plan is delivered in practice;
 - Continue development of the tenant involvement and consultation process to ensure tenants are more fully involved in service development and monitoring;

- Continued change management to deliver performance improvement across the housing service, including Building and Works as it relates to the delivery of the repairs service;
- Consideration of whether some negative value partial transfers may be of benefit to the stock (retained and transferred) and contribute to the Council's wider regeneration objectives;
- Managing costs down in line with reducing stock numbers, including HRA and General Fund costs;
- Increasing rents at RPI plus 1% per annum;
- Development of an HRA business plan to articulate the change required under retention, approved by the Council with commitment to deliver over the long term; and

(ii) otherwise, to note the terms of the report.

Councillor Willie Coffey seconded by Councillor Reid moved as an amendment to recommend that the Council should not transfer any of its housing stock, whether in full or in part, and instead should commit to a proactive strategy focussing on stock retention and service improvement in full consultation with Council tenants and staff, and that the Council recognise that current Scottish Executive policy of providing grants and debt write-off in support of approved stock transfers should be recognised as having an adverse impact on current and future service planning for the public rented sector, particularly within East Ayrshire.

On a division by a show of hands the motion was carried by 12 votes to 3.

PROPOSED HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2005/2006

2. There was submitted a report dated 14 April 2005 (circulated) by the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services which informed of the anticipated financial allocation for 2005/2006; and advised of the actions required to continue to direct the Investment Programme towards the objectives of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS).

Councillor Kelly seconded by Councillor Cree moved:-

- (i) to approve the initial Standard Delivery Plan, as appended to the report;
- (ii) to approve the proposals for the Housing Investment Programme 2005/2006 as set out in Section 4 of the report;
- (iii) to note that details of properties to be included in the Programme would be circulated to Elected Members in respect of their own Ward interests; and
- (iv) to note that regular progress reports on delivering the Programme would be submitted to Committee during the 2005/2006 financial year.

Councillor Willie Coffey seconded by Councillor Reid moved as amendment to note the report.

On a division by a show of hands the motion was carried by 12 votes to 4.

Anna Evans left the meeting at this point.

HOUSING BEST VALUE SERVICE REVIEW

3. There was submitted a report dated 1 April 2005 (circulated) by the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services which advised of the outcome of the Housing Best Value Service Review and sought authority for the approval of proposals to realign the Service to meet the changes identified by the Review.

Councillor Kelly seconded by Councillor Cree moved:-

- (i) to note the outcomes of the Housing Best Value Service Review;
- (ii) to approve the proposals set out in Sections 8 and 9 of the report;
- (iii) to authorise the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services, in conjunction with the Head of Personnel, to submit the staffing proposals for approval by the Corporate Governance Committee; and
- (iv) otherwise, to note the terms of the report.

Councillor Willie Coffey seconded by Councillor Reid moved as an amendment:-

- (i) to note the outcomes of the Housing Best Value Service Review;
- (ii) to approve the proposals set out in Sections 8 and 9 of the report and that a "Customer Repairs Sign Off" mechanism be introduced;
- (iii) to authorise the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services, in conjunction with the Head of Personnel, to submit the staffing proposals for approval by the Corporate Governance Committee; and
- (iv) otherwise, to note the terms of the report.

On a division by a show of hands the motion was carried by 12 votes to 4

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

4. It was agreed that under Section 50(A)(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 11 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

BUILDING AND WORKS: REVIEW OF STAFFING STRUCTURE

5.1 Declaration of Interest

Councillor Knapp declared a financial interest in this item of business and left the meeting at this point.

5.2 Consideration of Item

There was submitted a report dated 24 March 2005 (circulated) by the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services which sought approval to the staffing structure of the Building and Works Division of the Department of Neighbourhood Services.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to approve the staffing proposals as detailed within the report; and
- (ii) to refer the proposals to the Corporate Governance Committee in respect of its interests.

The meeting terminated at 1125 hours.