

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL****HOUSING COMMITTEE****MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 12 DECEMBER 1995 AT 1000 HRS  
IN THE MEETING ROOM, LONDON ROAD CENTRE, KILMARNOCK**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Kelly (Chair), Cree, Doyle, Stirling, Knapp, Fulton, Macrae, Nicoll, McDill, Sneller, G Smith, Carmichael, Taylor and J Smith

**ATTENDING:** Chief Executive; Director of Finance; Director of Housing; Senior Depute Director of Housing; Depute Director of Housing (Policy and Strategy); Depute Director of Housing (Support and Technical); Head of Public Relations and Marketing and Team Leader, Support Unit

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors McIntyre, Reid, Darnbrough and Campbell

**HOUSING ISSUES (HSG COMM 9/8/95 PAGE 167)**

1. There was submitted and noted a report (circulated) by Director of Housing updating Committee on the progress of a number of housing issues.

**DRAFT ESTIMATES 1996/97 - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT**

2. There was submitted a report (circulated) of 5 December 1995 by the Director of Housing enabling the Committee to agree the cost of the current level of service (CCLS) budgeted expenditure level 1996/97 for the Housing Revenue Account.

It was agreed that the Committee having considered the various issues referred to in paragraph 3 of the report agreed a CCLS budget for the Housing Revenue Account for 1996/97.

**REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE WORKING GROUP**

3. There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Director of Housing updating the Committee on the outcome of the Repairs and Maintenance Working Group and recommending amendments to the existing system.

It was agreed:

- (i) that existing repairs, categories and response time-scales be maintained within each of the separate contract areas pending the tendering of the East Ayrshire Council Measured Term Maintenance Contract in early 1997;
- (ii) that individual job classifications within the emergency and urgent categories be harmonised with effect from 1 April 1996, subject to detailed analysis of the financial costs involved;
- (iii) that in order to ensure a sensitive and flexible service provision, the Director of Housing be allowed a measure of discretion to be used in classified individual jobs where warranted. For example, any dangerous structure, elderly tenant/invalid, medical/social circumstances or security risk;
- (iv) that a system of job pre-inspection remain unchanged pending negotiation of the new Measured Term Maintenance Contract but that post inspections be carried out on 20% of completed repairs across all categories, the selection to be at random with staff having discretion to post-inspect any other job in their areas as necessary; and
- (v) that in support of the findings of the Vacant House Control Working Group, all empty properties be inspected initially to determine fitness for pre-allocation: thereafter, a joint inspection of the dwelling be carried out by the tenant, Housing and DSO representatives to agree necessary repairs prior to the work being instructed.

#### **TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR RENT COLLECTION**

4. There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Director of Housing, proposing interim arrangements for rent collection and recommending actions required to ensure effective service delivery post April 1996.

It was agreed:

- (i) that existing arrangements for rent collection within each of the separate authorities continues in 1996/97;
- (ii) that existing District Councils should order rent cards for use in 1996/97; and
- (iii) that the issues relating to cash collection be further investigated in order to ensure that customers have maximum access to payment facilities across East Ayrshire.

## **COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT AND HOUSING BENEFIT ISSUES**

5. There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Director of Housing advising the Committee on:
- (i) current Council Tax Benefit (CTB);
  - (ii) Housing Benefit (HB) issues being addressed by the Department; and
  - (iii) the information technology (IT) needs including costs, to support the service delivery in the run up to Local Government Re-organisation and also from 1 April 1996. Reported by Director of Housing that discussions were on-going with the Head of Information and Technology and a further report would be submitted before any expenditure was occurred.

It was agreed:

- (i) to approve the operation of 100% disregard of war widows and war disablement pensions;
- (ii) that delegated authority as outlined in paragraphs 1.8, Backdating of Benefits (the 56 day rule) and 2.2 of the Director's report referred to, Exceptional Circumstances (all claimants) - Regulation 61.2 be approved; and
- (iii) that the Director of Housing liaise with the Director of Social Work to develop a welfare rights and benefits campaign.

## **HOME CONTENTS INSURANCE**

6. There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Director of Housing advising of the different approach to Home Contents Insurance in the aggregating Authorities and recommending that the Council agree the concept of having a Home Contents Insurance Policy and that the arrangement of such a scheme be remitted to the Director of Housing in consultation with the Director of Finance.

It was agreed:

- (i) to approve the concept of offering tenants the opportunity to have Home Contents Insurance through a Council scheme; and
- (ii) that the Director of Housing be authorised to arrange such a scheme in consultation with the Director of Finance.

### **LONGPARK STRATEGY**

7. There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Director of Housing outlining the main elements of the Longpark Strategy. The report also sought a commitment from the Council to the continuation of the Strategy and an endorsement of the proposals for development of the northern part of the site.

It was agreed that the Council commit itself to contending with the general strategy and in particular, endorse the proposals to develop the Northern part of the site on a part rent/part sale basis, with financial assistance from Scottish Homes during the 1996/97 financial year.

### **DRAFT TENANCY AGREEMENT**

8. There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Director of Housing seeking approval in principle for the Draft Tenancy Agreement for East Ayrshire Council and agreement that documents be sent out for consultation.
- (i) the Draft Tenancy Agreement/Condition of Let was approved in principle; and
  - (ii) it was agreed that the Draft be circulated for consultation around a range of organisations including tenants groups, Scottish Consumer Council, Shelter and the Tenant Participation Advisory Service.

Meeting ended at 1050 hours.