

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL****HOUSING COMMITTEE****MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 1998 AT 1000 HOURS IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK**

**PRESENT:** Councillors David Macrae, Jim Kelly, Drew McIntyre, Irene Reeves, Gordon Cree, Wilma Doyle, Provost Robert Stirling, and Councillors Jane Darnbrough, Alan Campbell, John Knapp, David Fulton, Kim Nicoll, Robert McDill, David Sneller, George Smith, Jim Carmichael, and Tommy Farrell.

**ATTENDING:** David Montgomery, Chief Executive; John Hillis, Director of Housing; Chris McAleavey, Senior Depute Director of Housing; Jim Maitland, Depute Director of Housing; Anna Gallagher, Assistant Principal Solicitor; Arthur Gardiner, Senior Accountant; Julie Armstrong, Senior Administrative Officer; David Morgan, Public Relations Officer and Stuart Nelson, Administrative Officer.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Gordon McCredie, Douglas Reid and John Smith.

**CHAIR:** Councillor David Macrae, Vice Chair.

**HOUSING CAPITAL SUB-COMMITTEE OF 18 FEBRUARY 1998**

1. There were submitted and approved, both as a correct record and in respect of recommendations contained therein, the Minutes of the Housing Capital Sub-Committee of 18 February 1998 (circulated) as shown in Appendix I to these Minutes.

**DRAFT ESTIMATES 1998/99 – GENERAL SERVICES****2.1 FINANCIAL REPORT (Item 1 Page 3016)**

There was submitted and noted a report dated 20 February 1998 (circulated with the Agenda for the Special Policy and Resources Committee of 23 February 1998) by the Director of Finance which advised of the latest position now that the finalised figures had been obtained in terms of the 1998/99 budget and recommended that the Policy and Resources Committee determine final allocations for each of the Service Committees and requested those Committees now to finalise savings and growth packages to align service delivery plans with the final allocations for 1998/99 taking into account the views and comments made during the Council's public consultation exercise.

**2.2 REMIT FROM THE SPECIAL POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING OF 23 FEBRUARY 1998 (Item 1 Page 3016)**

There was submitted and noted a remit (Minute excerpt circulated) from the Special Policy and Resources Committee of 23 February 1998 which contained a request that this Committee finalise savings and growth packages for the Housing Service to align service delivery plans with the final financial allocations for 1998/99 as determined by the Special Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 23 February 1998.

### **2.3 GENERAL FUND HOUSING 1998/99**

There was submitted a report dated 23 February 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Housing which detailed a package of measures to align the service delivery plans with the final financial allocations for 1998/99 taking into account the views and comments made during the Council's public consultation exercise.

Councillor Macrae seconded by Councillor Kelly, moved:-

- (i) to approve the revised savings and growth package, as detailed in the report, to align the general fund housing budget to the final allocation remitted by the Policy and Resources Committee from its Special Meeting of 23 February 1998; and
- (ii) to recommend adoption of the savings and growth proposals to the Policy and Resources Committee at its Special Meeting to be held on 4 March 1998.

Councillor Nicoll seconded by Councillor Campbell, moved as an amendment that the Committee note the revised savings and growth proposals detailed in the report to align the general fund housing budget to the final allocation remitted by the Policy and Resources Committee from its Special Meeting of 23 February 1998, and to continue consideration of this matter to the Special Council Meeting to be held on 5 March 1998.

On a division by a show of hands, the motion was carried by 14 votes to 3.

### **BUDGETARY CONTROL SUMMARY STATEMENTS FOR PERIOD ENDED 2 JANUARY 1998 (PERIOD 10)**

#### **3.1 GENERAL FUND HOUSING**

There was submitted and noted a report dated 5 February 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Finance on the current Budgetary Control position and the projected out-turn for the Financial Year 1997/98 for the General Fund Housing account for the period ended 2 January 1998 (period 10).

#### **3.2 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT**

There was submitted and noted a report dated 10 February 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Finance on the current Budgetary Control position and the projected out-turn for the Financial Year 1997/98 for the Housing Revenue account for the period ended 2 January 1998 (Period 10).

### **NEW HOUSING PARTNERSHIP BID (Item 4, Page 2864)**

- 4. There was submitted a report dated 6 February 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Housing which provided an update on progress and expenditure in respect of the New Housing Partnership consents for 1997/98; and outlined the bid made to the Scottish Office for further consents for 1998/99.

It was agreed:-

- (i) that the anticipated underspend of £131,000 in respect of the new housing partnership allocation for 1997/98 be used (a) to meet a funding deficit in the sum of £42,391 on the very sheltered housing development at Witch Road, Kilmarnock, which was being provided in partnership with Scottish Homes and West of Scotland Housing Association; and (b) to consolidate ownership of vacant housing within Kilmarnock town centre, as part of the Council's Empty Homes Initiative, up to an estimated value of £88,609;
- (ii) that it be remitted to the Director of Housing to make the necessary arrangements in connection with the expenditure of monies in terms of (i) above;
- (iii) that the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services, enter into a suitable contract with Horizon Housing Association relative to the Council's interest in a proposed housing development in Kilmaurs to provide accommodation for people with physical disabilities, respite care and general needs houses;
- (iv) that legal and financial advisors to assist in developing the Council's vision for a public/private partnership organisation, be appointed with effect from 9 March 1998, the contract to include a "break" clause to enable this Committee to review the position in the light of the decisions of the Scottish Office on the New Housing Partnership bids for 1998/99;
- (v) that the Director of Housing would make a presentation to the Members of Council on the detail of the New Housing Partnership submission, in the light of the decision of the Scottish Office on the Council's bid for funding for this purpose; and
- (vi) otherwise, to note the terms of the report.

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT:  
NEIGHBOUR DISPUTES POLICY AND PROCEDURES (Item 3, Page 1355)**

5. There was submitted a report dated 10 February 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Housing on the Housing Department's policy and procedures for dealing with disputes between neighbours.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to note that a policy and procedures manual for dealing with neighbour disputes had been introduced; and
- (ii) that the Director of Housing would make appropriate arrangements, in consultation with the Chair, to publicise the availability of the neighbour disputes service within East Ayrshire.

**SCOTTISH HOMES' STRATEGY 1997-2000 (Item 6, Page 2147)**

6. There was submitted a report dated 29 January 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Housing on the content of Scottish Homes' Strategy 1997-2000.

It was agreed to note the terms of the report which, amongst other things:-

- (a) examined the role of the housing service within the wider social, economic and demographic context;

- (b) outlined the terms of Scottish Homes' strategy which, amongst other things, was aimed at promoting a longer term joint integrated solution to tackling the causes of deprivation and social exclusion, Scottish Homes' contribution towards the creation of sustainable communities being centred around the five strategic themes of quality, leverage, partnership, empowerment and inclusion; and
- (c) explained the relationship of the Agency's strategy to the Council's own housing strategy.

**SCOTTISH OFFICE GUIDANCE ON LOCAL AUTHORITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE ASSESSMENT OF SCOTTISH HOMES' STOCK TRANSFER PROPOSALS**

7. There was submitted a report dated 23 January 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Housing which advised of the terms of guidance issued by the Scottish Office on local authority involvement in the assessment of Scottish Homes' stock transfer proposals.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to establish a member/officer working group to discuss the approach the Council should take to Scottish Homes' stock transfer proposals, a report on the outcome of the group's deliberations to be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee;
- (ii) that the group referred to in (i) above would comprise four Members from the Administration, and two Members from the Opposition to be drawn from the Housing Committee, together with the appropriate officials, and that names be submitted to the next meeting of the Council;
- (iii) to accept the invitations from Shire Housing and Coylebank Tenants Co-operative to appoint a Member of the Council to their respective committees, and that names be submitted to the next meeting of the Council;
- (iv) that the Director of Housing would make representations to the Secretary of State, on behalf of the Council, suggesting that Central Government should put in place arrangements which would facilitate the transfer of ownership of Scottish Homes' housing stock to the local authority, in cases where this is the expressed preferred option of the tenants who would be affected; and
- (v) otherwise, to note the terms of the report.

**NEW STATUTORY HOMELESS PRIORITY NEED GROUP**

8. There was submitted a report dated 10 February 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Housing which advised of amendments to the Homeless Code contained within the Homeless Persons (Priority Need) Order 1997.

It was agreed to note the terms of the report which, amongst other things, explained that the Order, which came into force on 1 January 1998, designated young people under 21 previously looked after by a local authority (or in local authority care, or subject to a supervision requirement) at school leaving age or later, as a statutory homelessness priority group.

**PROBLEM HOUSE AREA:  
LOCHORE TERRACE, DARVEL (TENEMENTED FLATS) (Item 2.2, Page 2378)**

9. Having heard comments by the Director of Housing, it was agreed that this item be withdrawn from the Agenda and be considered by the Housing Capital Sub-Committee at a future meeting.

**PROPOSED DISPOSALS OF GROUND**

**10.1 KILMARNOCK: GROUND ADJACENT TO 47 GILMOUR STREET**

There was submitted a report dated 26 January 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Housing which requested the Committee to consider the sale of an area of ground extending to 16.7 sq. metres located adjacent to 47 Gilmour Street, Kilmarnock.

It was agreed, in view of comments made by the local Member concerned, to refuse this request.

**10.2 PATNA: GROUND TO THE REAR OF 19 MAIN STREET**

There was submitted a report dated 10 February 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Housing which sought approval to the sale of an area of ground located at the rear of 19 Main Street, Patna.

It was agreed:-

- (i) that the ground in question be declared surplus to requirements; and
- (ii) that it be remitted to the Head of Property to negotiate the sale of the ground on suitable terms to the owner of the garage at 19 Main Street, Patna.

**10.3 AUCHINLECK: GROUND ADJACENT TO 44 CHURCH STREET**

There was submitted a report dated 10 February 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Housing which sought approval to the sale of an area of ground extending to 84 square metres located adjacent to 44 Church Street, Auchinleck.

It was agreed:-

- (i) that the ground in question be declared surplus to requirements; and
- (ii) that it be remitted to the Head of Property to negotiate the sale of the ground on suitable terms to the owners of the property at 44 Church Street, Auchinleck.

The meeting terminated at 1047 hours.