

**EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL****HOUSING COMMITTEE****MINUTE OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17 APRIL 1996 AT 1400 HOURS  
IN THE COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Jim Kelly, Gordon McCredie, Gordon Cree, Wilma Doyle, Provost Robert Stirling, Councillors Jane Darnbrough, John Knapp, David Fulton, David Macrae, Kim Nicoll, Robert McDill, David Sneller, George Smith, Robert Taylor and Tommy Farrell.

**ATTENDING:** David Montgomery, Chief Executive; John Hillis, Director of Housing; Chris McAleavey, Senior Depute Director of Housing; Alan McKnight, Depute Director of Housing; Jim Maitland, Depute Director of Housing; Douglas Bulloch, Depute Director of Social Work; Douglas Campbell, Head of Public Relations and Marketing; Julie Armstrong, Senior Administrative Officer and Stuart Nelson, Administrative Officer.

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Drew McIntyre, Douglas Reid, Alan Campbell, James Carmichael and John Smith.

**CHAIR:** Councillor Jim Kelly, Chair.

**HOUSING CAPITAL ALLOCATION 1996/97**

1. There was submitted a report dated 9 April 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Housing, regarding the final housing capital consent for 1996-97 received from the Scottish Office Development Department on 28 March 1996.

It was agreed:

- (i) to note -
  - (a) that the Council's final housing capital consent for 1996/97, as confirmed by the Scottish Office Development Department amounted to £7.4m, net of loan debt repayments;
  - (b) that the amount of the gross consent equated to the Council's central assumption on expenditure on the HRA capital programme for 1996/97 and would enable all "core" projects approved by the Council to proceed and that arrangements for the carrying out of all such projects were being progressed;
  - (c) that an address specific programme, featuring the core housing capital projects for 1996/97, would be circulated to the Members in due course;
  - (d) that harmonisation of rent levels would provide an additional capital contribution from revenue amounting to £435,000 for window replacement in the former Kilmarnock and Loudoun District and that a report on the outcome of a survey being carried out to assess the condition of windows still awaiting replacement in that area would be submitted to the Housing Capital Sub-Committee at an early date;

- (ii) to authorise the Director of Housing, in consultation with the other appropriate Officers, to investigate the feasibility of funding the St. Andrew's Street, Kilmarnock, project through a Private Finance Initiative (PFI), and report on this matter to the next Meeting; and
- (iii) to remit to the Director of Housing to make representations to the Scottish Office re-affirming the Council's objection, in principle, to the requirement placed upon local authorities to make re-payment of outstanding housing capital loan debt from capital receipts and suggesting that repayment in respect of 50% of the Council's loan debt be commuted.

## **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING: IMPROVEMENT AND REPAIR GRANT STRATEGY**

2. There was submitted a report dated 9 April 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Housing, in respect of changes in the rules governing eligibility within the Improvement and Repair grant system, and seeking approval to an Improvement and Repair grant strategy for private sector housing.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to note the recent amendments to the rules governing eligibility for improvement and repairs grants which provided that eligibility for most discretionary improvement and repairs grants in respect of applications received after 1st April 1996 would be determined by reference to the Council Tax band within which the house which was the subject of the application was placed, rather than by reference to rateable value as previously, although eligibility in respect of applications lodged with local authorities prior to 1 April 1996 would continue to be determined by reference to rateable value; and
- (ii) that as a result of a significant decrease in the resources available for improvement and repairs grants in 1996/97, such grants be disbursed in accordance with the following criteria:-

### **Priority One - Statutory Grants**

To accommodate applications for grant where

- (a) an improvement order had been served;
- (b) the provision of a standard amenity was required; and
- (c) a repairs notice to deal with serious disrepair had been served.

### **Priority Two - Discretionary Grants**

To accommodate the applications for grant where

- (a) it was proposed to alter or replace lead plumbing;
- (b) the repairs, if neglected, would threaten the use or future life of the house; and
- (c) applications were received from occupiers or future occupiers of houses which were above the tolerable standard and lacked a fixed bath or shower.

### **Community Care - Disabled Grants**

A separate financial allocation had been set aside in order to accommodate applications in respect of the improvement of a house for a disabled occupant

where the improvement works consisted of or included works needed to meet a requirement arising from the particular disability from which the occupant suffered.

### **SCOTTISH HOMES: STOCK TRANSFER**

3. There was submitted a report dated 9 April 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Housing, providing details of Scottish Homes' progress in relation to the transfer of their stock in the East Ayrshire area.

It was agreed:

- (i) to continue to monitor the progress of Scottish Homes' stock transfer initiatives, and that further reports on this matter by the Director of Housing be submitted to this Committee as and when appropriate;
- (ii) to remit to the Director of Housing to arrange a presentation for Members of the Council by Scottish Homes Initiatives Unit on Scottish Homes' local housing stock transfer initiatives; and
- (iii) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

Arising from discussion, the Committee also agreed that a report be prepared by the Director of Housing on ground maintenance arrangements within Scottish Homes' housing estates in East Ayrshire and submitted to the next Meeting.

### **PROPOSAL FOR EXTENSION OF THE GARDEN MAINTENANCE SCHEME**

4. There was submitted a report dated 9 April 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Housing, advising of the arrangements which had been made to extend the Garden Maintenance Scheme throughout the Council area, along the lines of the Scheme for elderly and disabled persons which had been operating in the former Cumnock and Doon Valley District.

It was agreed:

- (i) that the Garden Maintenance Scheme would be open to all residents of East Ayrshire, irrespective of the tenure of housing which they occupied, who were aged 70 years or over, or who were registered disabled persons or who were in receipt of either Incapacity Benefit or Disability Living Allowance;
- (ii) that persons living in the same household as someone who was over 16 years of age and under pensionable age and was not disabled would not be eligible for the Scheme, although, in exceptional cases the presence of a carer in the household might be disregarded;
- (iii) that the Commercial Operations Service be appointed as Contractor to carry out work under the Scheme during 1996/97;
- (iv) that regular reports be submitted by the Director of Housing to future meetings in order to enable the Committee to monitor the rate of expenditure on the Garden Maintenance Scheme as the year progressed; and
- (v) that no charge be made in respect of work carried out under the Scheme in cases where the applicant was in receipt of Housing or Council Tax Benefit, but that in all other cases an annual charge of £30 per property be levied.

### **FUNDING OF TENANTS' ASSOCIATIONS**

5. There was submitted a report dated 9 April 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Housing regarding proposals for the funding of tenants' groups in East Ayrshire.

It was agreed:

- (i) that newly formed Council tenants'/joint Council tenants' and residents' associations be given a start-up grant of £100;
- (ii) that annual grants to Council tenants'/joint Council tenants' and residents' associations be paid at the rate of £0.20 per house with a minimum grant of £50 per annum;
- (iii) that the Council would encourage the formation of Council tenants'/joint Council tenants' and residents' associations and that the development of such associations should fall within the remit of the seven Local Committees which would be in a position to recognise the particular requirements of their local communities, a report on this matter, by the Director of Housing, to be submitted to each Local Committee relative to its respective area; and
- (iv) that applications for funding from tenants'/joint tenants' and residents' associations be dealt with by the respective Local Committees on the basis of the levels of grant referred to in (i) and (ii) above.

### **HOUSING - THE PUBLIC'S OPINION**

6. There was submitted and noted a report dated 9 April 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Housing, on the findings of a national opinion poll on housing issues carried out by the Chartered Institute of Housing/Market Research Scotland.

### **CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF HOUSING IN SCOTLAND: ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1996**

7. There was submitted and noted a report dated 9 April 1996 (circulated) by the Director of Housing, on the Chartered Institute of Housing in Scotland's Annual Conference 1996, which had been held in Aviemore from 27 February to 1 March 1996.

### **AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS TO PROPERTIES (Item 2, Page 682)**

8. There was submitted a joint report dated 28 February 1996 (circulated) by the Directors of Housing and of Social Work, advising of the proposed arrangements for the separation of functions in respect of the provision of aids and adaptations for properties within East Ayrshire Council with effect from 1 April 1996, and seeking the Committee's approval to the proposals.

It was agreed:

- (i) to approve, in respect of the Housing Committee's interest, the arrangements for the location of responsibilities for elements of the aids and adaptations service as set out in the report;
- (ii) to authorise the Directors of Housing and of Social Work to publicise and implement these arrangements; and

- (iii) to note that a joint report by the Directors of Housing and of Social Work on the harmonisation of assessment procedures in respect of applications for aids and adaptations would be submitted to the next Meeting of this Committee and of the Community Care Sub-Committee of the Social Work Committee for consideration.

**SERVICE FOR OLDER PEOPLE - OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF  
"VERY SHELTERED HOUSING" (Item 5, Page 684)**

9. There was submitted a joint report dated 6 March 1996 (circulated) by the Directors of Housing and of Social Work, setting out the policy, strategic and service issues in relation to meeting the needs of an ageing population, and proposing an approach to the development of "very sheltered housing" which would provide a normalising service promoting privacy, dignity and independence for older people.

It was agreed:

- (i) that the Directors of Housing and of Social Work collaborate on developing "very sheltered housing" as a fundamental element of community care services in East Ayrshire;
- (ii) that the Directors of Housing and of Social Work negotiate with Scottish Homes and with Housing Associations to develop, to the fullest extent, new "very sheltered housing" schemes;
- (iii) that the Directors of Housing and of Social Work survey the existing sheltered housing network to determine its future utilisation, whether as "very sheltered housing" or as other forms of provision; and
- (iv) that regular reports by the Director of Housing on the progress towards provision of "very sheltered housing" be submitted to this Committee for consideration.

The Meeting terminated at 1440 hours.