

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**HOUSING COMMITTEE****MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8 APRIL 1998 AT 1000 HOURS
IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON ROAD,
KILMARNOCK**

PRESENT: Councillors Jim Kelly, Gordon McCredie, Irene Reeves, Gordon Cree, Douglas Reid, Wilma Doyle, Provost Robert Stirling and Councillors Jane Darnbrough, Kathleen Hall, David Macrae, Kim Nicoll, David Sneller, George Smith and Jim Carmichael.

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; Julie Armstrong, Senior Administrative Officer; Trish McLean, Benefits Manager; David Morgan, Public Relations Officer; and Stuart Nelson, Administrative Officer.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Drew McIntyre, Alan Campbell, John Knapp, David Fulton, Robert McDill and Tommy Farrell.

CHAIR: Councillor Jim Kelly, Chair (Agenda Item 1) and Councillor David Macrae, Vice Chair (remaining Agenda Items).

CHAIR'S REMARKS

1. The Chair welcomed to the meeting Trish McLean, who had recently been appointed to the post of Benefits Manager within the Department of Housing; and also Danny Gibson, a senior pupil at Auchinleck Academy.

Councillor Kelly then vacated the Chair in favour of Councillor Macrae, Vice Chair.

ANNUAL POLICY STATEMENT 1998/99 (Item 4, Page 2146)

2. There was submitted a report dated 24 March 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Housing which requested the approval of the Committee to the Annual Policy Statement for 1998/99.

It was agreed:

- (i) to formally approve the Annual Policy Statement 1998/99 as contained within Appendix I to the report, and which had already been sent to the Scottish Office following consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chair of the Committee in order to meet the Scottish Office deadline; and
- (ii) that the Director of Housing would submit to the next meeting a report on the progress relative to the Council's bid to the Scottish Office for Challenge Funding under the Rough Sleepers Initiative.

**GENERAL SERVICES (HOUSING): THREE YEAR CAPITAL PLAN -
1998/99 - 2000/2001**

3. There was submitted a report dated 27 March 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Housing which invited the Committee to consider the detail of the General Services (Housing) Three Year Capital Plan 1998/99 - 2000/2001.

It was agreed to approve the General Services (Housing) Capital Plan 1998/99 - 2000/2001 as detailed within Appendix I to the report.

**CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF HOUSING ANNUAL CONFERENCE
(Item 1.2, Page 5)**

4. There was submitted and noted a report dated 20 March 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Housing which advised of attendance at the Chartered Institute of Housing Conference which was held from 3-6 March 1998 in Dundee.

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL'S CHILDREN'S SERVICE PLAN (Item 1, Page 3178)

5. There was submitted and noted a report (circulated) by the Director of Housing which advised of the preparation of the East Ayrshire Council Children's Service Plan which was due for publication in April 1998.

SCOTTISH OFFICE EMPTY HOMES INITIATIVE (Item 5, Page 2553)

6. There was submitted a report dated 20 March 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Housing which advised of the bid submitted by the Council in terms of the Scottish Office Empty Homes Initiative for the financial year 1998/99.

It was agreed:

- (i) to formally approve the terms of the Empty Homes Initiative bid for 1998/99, as detailed in the report and which, amongst other things, sought funding of £28,400.13 for the continuation of employment of the Empty Property Officer and publicity, and £928,000 for resources to be used to bring long term empty properties back into use: and
- (ii) otherwise, to note terms of the report.

EAST AYRSHIRE GARDEN COMPETITION (Item 1, Page 2693)

7. There was submitted a report dated 24 March 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Housing on proposed amendments to the arrangements for the East Ayrshire Garden Competition.

It was agreed that commencing with this year's Competition the following amended arrangements would apply, namely:-

- (i) that the Competition would continue to be advertised in the local press, and at Council Offices and Libraries, as at present and that this arrangement would be augmented by advertising on local radio;
- (ii) that the awards presentation ceremony would be increased in profile by bringing together all prizewinners, Councillors and selected members of Local Committees at a suitable function to be arranged for this purpose, the venue of the function to be rotated on an annual basis by Local Committee area; and
- (iii) that it be remitted to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Chair, to finalise arrangements for the Competition.

HOUSING DEPARTMENT: STAFFING AMENDMENTS TO STRUCTURE

- 8.1 There was submitted a report dated 18 March 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Housing which sought approval to proposed amendments to the staffing structure of the Housing Department in response to the 1998/99 budget exercise.

It was agreed:

- (i) that the following amendments would be made to the staffing structure of the Housing Department, namely:-
 - (a) one post of Policy Officer, which was at present vacant, be deleted from the establishment with effect from 1 April 1998;
 - (b) three Clerical Assistant posts (GS3), based at John Dickie Street, Kilmarnock, be transferred to the Housing Department from the Department of Support Services, with effect from 1 April 1998; and
 - (c) the creation of three new Clerical Assistant posts (GS3) to be based at Local Housing Offices at Western Road and Caprington Avenue, Kilmarnock and Ayr Road, Cumnock; and
- (ii) that the above proposals be remitted to the Personnel and Property Sub-Committee of the Policy and Resources Committee in respect of its interest.

NEW POST OF SERVICE OFFICER (SYSTEMS)

- 8.2** There was submitted a report dated 18 March 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Housing which recommended the creation of a new Service Officer post within the Housing Department to promote and support the efficiency of Information and IT Systems within the Department.

It was agreed:

- (i) that a new post of Service Officer (Systems) be added to the establishment of the Housing Department, initially on a two year fixed term contract; and
- (ii) that the above proposal be remitted to the Personnel and Property Sub-Committee of the Policy and Resources Committee in respect of its interest.

HOUSING BENEFIT AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT: CHALLENGE FUNDING 1998/99: VISITING INITIATIVES FUNDING (CIRCULAR F20/97)

- 9.** There was submitted a report dated 24 March 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Housing which advised of the successful outcome of the Council's bid for Challenge Funding for the Visiting Initiative for year 1998/99, under which the Department of Social Security had invited the submission of proposals which would promote visiting activity to assist in combatting benefit fraud.

It was agreed:

- (i) to note the Council's successful bid for Challenge Funding under this heading; and
- (ii) to approve the appointment of two temporary investigators within the Benefits Section of the Housing Department, each on a one year contract and to remit this matter to the Personnel and Property Sub-Committee of the Policy and Resources Committee, in respect of its interest.

Councillor Cree left the meeting during discussion of this item

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 1997/98: VOID CONTROL (Item 6, Page 2554)

- 10.** There was submitted a report dated 24 March 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Housing which advised of performance in managing void properties since 1 April 1997.

It was agreed:

- (i) to note the terms of the report; and
- (ii) that the Director of Housing (a) submit to the next meeting a report providing information on the rate of turnover of the Council's housing stock compared to that of other authorities; and (b) submit, to future meetings, on a quarterly basis, a report providing a range of key information relevant to the management of void properties, in order to enable the Committee to closely monitor performance on this matter.

**PROPOSED DISPOSALS OF GROUND
KILMARNOCK: GROUND AT SIDE OF 2 MACGREGOR DRIVE**

11.1 There was submitted a report (circulated) by the Director of Housing which sought approval to the sale of an area of ground located at the side of 2 MacGregor Drive, New Farm Loch, Kilmarnock.

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 property at 2 MacGregor Drive, Kilmarnock.

KILMARNOCK: GROUND AT FRONT OF 18 BOYD STREET

11.2 There was submitted a report dated 24 March 1998 (circulated) by the Director of Housing which sought approval to the sale of an area of ground located at the front of 18 Boyd Street, Kilmarnock.

It was agreed:

- (i) that the area of 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 property at 18 Boyd Street, Kilmarnock.

The meeting terminated at 1058 hours.