

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**HOUSING COMMITTEE****MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8 OCTOBER 1997 AT 1000 HRS
IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS,
LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK**

PRESENT: Councillors Jim Kelly, Gordon McCredie, Gordon Cree, Douglas Reid, Wilma Doyle, Provost Robert Stirling, Councillors Jane Darnbrough, John Knapp, David Fulton, David Macrae, Kim Nicoll, Robert McDill, George Smith, Jim Carmichael and John Smith.

ATTENDING: David Montgomery, Chief Executive; John Hillis, Director of Housing; Chris McAleavey, Senior Depute Director of Housing; Tom McHugh, Depute Director of Finance; Jim Maitland, Depute Director of Housing; Alan McKnight, Depute Director of Housing; Anna Gallagher, Assistant Principal Solicitor; Alistair Gardiner, Senior Accountant; Julie Armstrong, Senior Administrative Officer; Angela Cameron, Finance Officer (Housing); David Morgan, Public Relations Officer; and Stuart Nelson, Administrative Officer.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Drew McIntyre, Alan Campbell, David Sneller, Robert Taylor and Tommy Farrell.

CHAIR: Jim Kelly, Chair.

HOUSING CAPITAL SUB-COMMITTEE

1. There was submitted (circulated) and approved both as a correct record and in respect of the recommendations contained therein, Minutes of the Housing Capital Sub-Committee of 3 September 1997, as contained in the Appendix to these Minutes.

**BUDGETARY CONTROL STATEMENTS FOR PERIOD ENDING
12 SEPTEMBER 1997 (PERIOD 6)****2.1 GENERAL FUND HOUSING**

There was submitted and noted a report dated 23 September 1997 (circulated) by the Director of Finance advising of the current budgetary control position and the projected out-turn for the year for the General Fund Housing for the period ended 12 September 1997 (Period 6).

2.2 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

There was submitted and noted a report dated 24 September 1997 (circulated) by the Director of Finance advising of the current budgetary control position and the projected out-turn for the year for the Housing Revenue Account for the period ended 12 September 1997 (Period 6).

PROPOSED HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY (Item 5, Page 2373)

3. There was submitted a report dated 25 September 1997 (circulated) by the Director of Housing advising of the outcome of the most recent consultation exercise on the proposed East Ayrshire Council Housing Allocation Policy.

It was agreed:

- (i) to refer the responses received as a result of the consultation exercise to the Member/Officer Housing Working Group on Harmonisation Issues for consideration;
- (ii) that a further report on the proposed Housing Allocation Policy would be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee in the light of the outcome of the Working Groups deliberations; and
- (iii) that the Opposition Group would be invited to appoint one named Member to serve on the Member/Officer Housing Working Group, the name to be given to the Chief Executive.

PROCUREMENT OF INTEGRATED HOUSING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (Item 10, Page 1669)

4. There was submitted a report dated 25 September 1997 (circulated) by the Director of Housing advising of the progress made towards procurement of an Integrated Housing Management System.

It was agreed:

- (i) to note
 - (a) the arrangements for tendering, as detailed in the report which included that the procedure would be carried out in conjunction with the Authorities Buying Consortium (ABC) and that the last date for the return of bids would be 2 December 1997;
 - (b) that the total estimated cost of acquisition and implementation of the new system was likely to exceed £250,000 which would be phased over a three year period with a sum of £100,000 having been included in the Housing Capital Programme for 1997/98 for this purpose;
- (ii) to authorise the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Head of Information Technology, to proceed to tender on the basis of the arrangements detailed in the report; and
- (iii) that the Director of Housing would submit a report on the outcome of the tendering process to a future meeting of this Committee.

EMPTY HOMES INITIATIVE

5. There was submitted a report dated 24 September 1997 (circulated) by the Director of Housing advising of the Government's new Empty Homes Initiative and of the steps being taken to bid for funding from the Scottish Office.

The Director of Housing confirmed that in the working up of any bid there would be informal discussions with appropriate Elected Members and copies of the finalised bid would be available to any Elected Member on request.

It was agreed:

- (i) to note the terms of the report;
- (ii) to remit to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Chair, to prepare and submit a bid to the Scottish Office for Empty Homes Initiative Challenge Funding, subject to the consultation arrangements with Elected Members as indicated above.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 1997/98: VOID CONTROL

6. There was submitted a report dated 1 October 1997 (circulated) by the Director of Housing advising of the Housing Department's 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 would prepare and submit to the Committee at the earliest opportunity, an interim report on the management of void houses in the light of consultation with the appropriate Local Committees in respect of their interests in this matter; and as soon as possible thereafter a further report detailing the overall position.

Provost Stirling left the meeting during discussion but prior to determination, of this item.

PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF FLATS AT 57-63 CAMPBELTOWN DRIVE, KILMARNOCK

7. There was submitted a report dated 29 September 1997 (circulated) by the Director of Housing seeking approval for the demolition of the four 4 apartment flatted dwellings at 57-63 Campbeltown Drive, Kilmarnock, which had been damaged by fire together with associated site reinstatement.

It was agreed:

- (i) that the properties concerned be demolished and the site reinstated, the Committee being satisfied that this was the only reasonable solution in light of all of the circumstances;
- (ii) that the Director of Housing would make arrangements for the necessary works to be carried out; and
- (iii) that it be remitted to the Housing Capital Sub-Committee of this Committee to consider the use of the net capital receipt of £81,460 to be received from the Council's insurers.

Councillor McCredie left the meeting during discussion, but prior to determination of this item.

HOUSING BENEFIT AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT - REVIEW OF SECTION

8. There was submitted a report dated 6 October 1997 (circulated) by the Director of Housing recommending a revised structure for the Housing and Council Tax Benefit Sections of the Department of Housing in order to accommodate the nature and extent of the Section's workload.

It was agreed:

- (i) to approve the revised staffing requirements for the Benefit Section as detailed in the report; and
- (ii) to remit to the Personnel Sub-Committee to determine the appropriate gradings for the posts of Benefits Manager and Team Leaders included within the revised staffing structure.

HOUSING BENEFIT ACCURACY REVIEWS

9. There was submitted a report dated 23 September 1997 (circulated) by the Director of Housing advising of the outcome of the Council's application to the Department of Social Security to take part in the Department's National and Local Accuracy Reviews.

It was agreed:

- (i) to accept the Department of Social Security's invitation to participate, as one of 27 Authorities within the United Kingdom, in the Department's Local Accuracy Review 1997/98 which will, over a period of three years, test whether regular measurement of change in local fraud is practical and useful;
- (ii) to participate in the Department's National Accuracy Review to the limited extent detailed in the report, the purpose of this Review being to obtain a national perspective on the extent and features of Housing Benefit fraud;
- (iii) otherwise, to note the terms of the report.

NEW HOUSING PARTNERSHIPS AND FUTURE NEW BUILD HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

10. There was submitted a report dated 29 September 1997 (circulated) by the Director of Housing outlining opportunities for promoting housing development within East Ayrshire through partnership with the private sector.

It was agreed:

- (i) to endorse the principle of developing a "New Housing Partnership" to enable significant housing development within East Ayrshire;
- (ii) that the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Director of Finance, Head of Legal Services, Head of Contracting and Technical Services and Head of Planning and Building Control, bring forward proposals to this Committee for such a partnership; and
- (iii) otherwise, to note the terms of the report.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

11. It was agreed that under Section 50A(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 paragraph 9 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1987: SALE OF COUNCIL HOUSE

- 12.** There was submitted a report dated 29 September 1997 (circulated) by the Director of Support Services on an application to purchase a Council house in terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.

It was agreed:

- (i) to approve the sale of the house concerned to the applicant detailed in the report, in terms of Section 61(6)(b) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987; and
- (ii) to remit to the Head of Legal Services to complete the sale of the property in terms of the concluded Missives.

The meeting terminated at 1122 hrs.