

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25 AUGUST 1999 AT 1000 HOURS IN THE MEETING ROOM, COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, LONDON ROAD, KILMARNOCK

PRESENT: Councillors Jimmy Kelly, Stephanie Young, Willie Coffey, Douglas Reid, Robert Stevenson, John Weir, David Macrae, Jane Darnbrough, John Knapp, Finlay MacLean, George Smith, Tommy Farrell, Julie Faulds, William Menzies, Provost Jimmy Boyd and Councillor Jimmy Carmichael.

ATTENDING: Kate McVey, Assistant Chief Executive; James Lavery, Director of Homes and Technical Services; Douglas Bulloch, Director of Social Work; John Stobie, Head of Building and Works; Chris McAleavey, Head of Homes; Tom Wilkie, Head of Technical Services; David McLellan, Financial Services Manager; George Malone, Principal Engineer (Technical Services); Julie Armstrong, Senior Administrative Officer; David Morgan, Public Relations Officer; and Stuart Nelson, Administrative Officer.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Katie Hall, Ann Hay, Drew McIntyre and Jim Raymond.

CHAIR: Councillor Jimmy Kelly, Chair.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. The Chair, at his discretion, and in terms of Standing Order 15.1, agreed to alter the order of business and consider the undernoted items 3, 4, 5 and 6 at the point shown.

SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

2. There were submitted and approved, both as correct records and in respect of any recommendations contained therein, the undernoted Sub-Committee Minutes as contained within Appendices I and II of these Minutes.
 - 2.1 **CHAIR'S SUB-COMMITTEE OF 27 MAY 1999** - Appendix I.
 - 2.2 **HOUSING CAPITAL SUB-COMMITTEE OF 11 AUGUST 1999** - Appendix II.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

3. 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 items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

BUILDING AND WORKS DIRECT LABOUR ORGANISATION

4.1 PRESENTATION

The Committee received a joint presentation by the Director of Homes and Technical Services and the Head of Building and Works on issues related to the Council's Building and Works Direct Labour Organisation.

There then followed a general discussion on matters arising from the presentation and the Director responded to questions put by members of the Committee on a range of issues.

The Chair thanked the Director and the Head of Building and Works for what had been an interesting and informative presentation.

4.2 BUSINESS PLAN

There was submitted a report dated 19 August 1999 (circulated) by the Director of Homes and Technical Services which recommended approval of the Business Plan for the Building and Works Section for the year 1999/2000.

It was agreed to approve the Business Plan for the Building and Works Direct Labour Organisation for 1999/2000 as appended to the report, subject to the Director of Homes and Technical Services agreeing such amendments as may be required following discussions with CAPITA Consultants.

4.3 BUDGETARY CONTROL SUMMARY STATEMENT FOR PERIOD ENDED 2 JULY 1999 (PERIOD 3)

There was submitted and noted a joint report (circulated) by the Directors of Homes and Technical Services and of Finance on the current budgetary control position and the project out-turn for the financial year 1999/2000 for the Building and Works DLO for the period ended 2 July 1999 (Period 3).

PROPOSED DISPOSALS OF GROUND

5.1 GARDEN GROUND AT 8 JAMES BAIRD COURT, DARVEL

There was submitted a report dated 10 August 1999 (circulated) by the Director of Homes and Technical Services which sought approval to the sale of an area of garden ground extending to approximately 173 square metres at 8 James Baird Court, Darvel.

It was agreed:-

- (i) that the area of ground in question be declared surplus to departmental requirements; and
- (ii) that it be remitted to the Director of Development Services to negotiate the sale of the ground on suitable terms to the owner of the adjacent property.

5.2 GROUND AT 19 GROUGAR ROAD, CROOKEDHOLM

There was submitted a report dated 10 August 1999 (circulated) by the Director of Homes and Technical Services which sought approval to the sale of an area of ground extending to approximately 114 square metres adjacent to 19 Grougar Road, Crookedholm.

It was agreed:-

- (i) that the area of ground in question be declared surplus to departmental requirements; and
- (ii) that it be remitted to the Director of Development Services to negotiate the sale of the ground on suitable terms to the owner of the adjacent property.

REQUEST FOR ACCOMMODATION

6. There was submitted a report dated 10 August 1999 (circulated) by the Director of Homes and Technical Services on a request for housing accommodation.

It was agreed to recommend to Council:-

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| C | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) that a Council house, as specified in the report, be leased to the applicant for a period of two years; (ii) that rental for the property concerned be fixed at the annual rental charge which would apply to a mainstream tenancy; and (iii) that the Director of Homes and Technical Services make the necessary arrangements. | C |
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RE-ADMISSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

7. The Press and public were then re-admitted.

THE FUTURE FOR HOMES AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

8.1 PRESENTATION

The Committee received a joint presentation by the Director of Homes and Technical Services and the Head of Homes on the way forward for, and the issues to be addressed, by the Department.

Councillor Knapp left the meeting at this point.

There then followed a general discussion during which (a) the Director and Head of Homes responded to questions put by members of the Committee; and (b) it was agreed:

- (i) that the Director of Homes and Technical Services would provide information directly to Councillor W Coffey on the number of outstanding job lines for repairs to Council houses; and
- (ii) that the Chief Executive would arrange a meeting with Councillor Reid to discuss progress in dealing with Housing Benefit claims; and
- (iii) that the Director would consider the possibility of tenants being issued with a response card upon completion of repairs to their house, which would invite comments on aspects of the work undertaken, for return to the Department.

The Chair thanked the Director and the Head of Homes for the presentation which had been most useful in outlining the future direction of, and the challenges facing, the Department.

Councillor Farrell left the meeting at this point.

8.2 REPORT

There was submitted a report dated 12 August 1999 (circulated) by the Director of Homes and Technical Services which considered the way forward for the new Homes and Technical Services Department and highlighted the key areas for review as the Department moves into the new millennium.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to note the terms of the report; and
- (ii) that the Director of Homes and Technical Services would bring forward further reports to future meetings, setting out proposals for progress in respect of the key areas identified.

**HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT: BUDGETARY CONTROL SUMMARY
STATEMENT FOR PERIOD ENDED 2 JULY 1999 (PERIOD 3)**

9. There was submitted and noted a joint report (circulated) by the Directors of Homes and Technical Services and of Finance on the current budgetary control position and the projected out-turn for the financial year 1999/2000 for the Housing Revenue Account for the period ended 2 July 1999 (Period 3).

ANNUAL POLICY STATEMENT

10. There was submitted a report dated 9 August 1999 (circulated) by the Director of Homes and Technical Services which sought approval of the Council's Annual Policy Statement for 1999/2000.

It was agreed to approve the Annual Policy Statement 1999/2000 as contained within Appendix 1 to the report, 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.

Councillor Farrell rejoined the meeting at this point.

ALLOCATIONS POLICY

11. There was submitted a report dated 10 August 1999 (circulated) by the Director of Homes and Technical Services which advised of progress in the introduction of the new Allocations Policy supported by the Orchard Integrated Management System; and highlighted areas within the Policy which required to be reviewed with proposals for amendment.

It was agreed that consideration of this report be continued to a Special Meeting of the Committee following a presentation on the Allocations Policy, for the benefit of all Members of the Council, by the appropriate Officers.

**HOUSING NEEDS ANALYSIS -
LOCAL AREA COMMITTEE COMPARATIVE REPORT**

12. There was submitted a report dated 18 August 1999 (circulated) by the Director of Homes and Technical Services on the East Ayrshire Council Housing Needs Analysis - Local Area Committee Comparative Report.

It was agreed:-

- (i) that the Director of Homes and Technical Services would enter into discussion with the Local Committees on the findings of the Housing Needs Analysis appropriate to their respective areas; and
- (ii) otherwise to note the terms of the report.

**HOUSING GREEN PAPER: INVESTING IN MODERNISATION -
AN AGENDA FOR SCOTLAND'S HOUSING**

13. There was submitted a report dated 9 August 1999 (circulated) by the Director of Homes and Technical Services on proposed comments on the Housing Green Paper entitled "Investing in Modernisation - An Agenda for Scotland's Housing", for submission to the Scottish Office.

It was agreed that comments on the various issues raised in the Green Paper, as set out in the Appendix to the report, be submitted to the Scottish Office, subject to further emphasising the Council's view that, in principle, individuals should have the option of access to owner occupation.

Councillor Knapp rejoined the meeting at this point.

ARREARS CONTROL

14. There was submitted a report dated 10 August 1999 (circulated) by the Director of Homes and Technical Services on the current position with regard to tenant rent arrears and which proposed alternative practices which could be adopted.

The Director of Social Work reported on the contribution made by the Anti-Poverty Unit within his Department in providing benefits and debt management support to tenants with arrears.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to note the position on tenant rent arrears;
- (ii) that the measures, as detailed in Sections 5 and 6 of the report, be implemented to deal with tenant rent arrears;
- (iii) that the Director of Homes and Technical Services, in conjunction with the Director of Finance and Director of Social Work, make appropriate arrangements for implementation of the above measures.

Councillor Reid left the meeting at this point.

**LOCALISED DAY CARE/RESPIRE SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA IN
THE IRVINE VALLEY**

15. There was submitted a joint report dated 19 August 1999 (circulated) by the Directors of Social Work and of Homes and Technical Services which sought approval for the sheltered house at 20 Ross Court, Galston to be made available to the Social Work Department to facilitate the development of localised day care services for individuals with dementia.

It was agreed:-

- (i) that the house at No. 20 Ross Court be made available to the Social Work Department for the purpose requested; and
- (ii) otherwise, to note the terms of the report.

TENANTS' GRANTS SCHEME

16. There was submitted a report dated 3 August 1999 (circulated) by the Director of Homes and Technical Services which invited the Committee to consider varying the level of support given to Tenants' Associations.

It was agreed:-

- (i) that the new rates of grant available to Tenants'/Residents' Associations to take effect immediately would be as follows:- start-up grant: £150; and annual grant: 25p per Council tenancy, with a minimum payment of £100; and
- (ii) otherwise, to note the terms of the report.

Councillor Reid rejoined the meeting at this point.

ENERGY ADVICE UNIT: UPDATE REPORT

17. There was submitted a report dated 14 July 1999 (circulated) by the Director of Homes and Technical Services on recent developments in the implementation of the Council's response to its obligations within the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995.

It was agreed:-

- (i) to authorise a letter of support for the South Ayrshire Energy Agency in respect of their application to become an Energy Efficiency Advice Centre; and
- (ii) otherwise to note the terms of the report.

EAST AYRSHIRE HOUSING PARTNERSHIP: PROGRESS REPORT AT 30 JULY 1999

18. There was submitted and noted a joint report dated 30 July 1999 (circulated) by the Director of Homes and Technical Services and the Chief Executive, East Ayrshire Housing Partnership, on the progress of the East Ayrshire Housing Partnership.

MANAGING ABSENCE

19. There was submitted and noted a report dated 6 August 1999 (circulated) by the Director of Homes and Technical Services which analysed the incidence of absence within the Homes and Technical Services Department for the second quarter, 1999, and indicated action being taken by the Department in relation to the management of absence.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRESS REPORT

20. There was submitted and noted a report dated 4 August 1999 (circulated) by the Director of Homes and Technical Services which advised of progress being made in the field of Health and Safety across the Department of Homes and Technical Services.

The meeting terminated at 1218 hours.