

STIRLING COUNCIL

MINUTES of MEETING of the ENVIRONMENT & HOUSING COMMITTEE held in the COUNCIL CHAMBERS, OLD VIEWFORTH, STIRLING on THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2019 at 10.00am

Present

Councillor Jim THOMSON (Convener)

Councillor Alistair BERRILL (Substitute)	Councillor Alastair MAJURY
Councillor Martin EARL	Councillor Susan MCGILL (Substitute)
Councillor Danny GIBSON	Councillor Alasdair TOLLEMACHE
Councillor Alasdair MACPHERSON	Councillor Evelyn TWEED

In Attendance

Kevin Argue, Transport Development Team Leader
Richard Callender, Planning Officer
Lorna Cameron, Chief Housing Officer
Christina Cox, Service Manager – Planning & Building Standards
David Crighton, Roads & Land Operations
Carlyn Fraser, Roads & Land Services Team Leader
Emma Fyvie, Team Leader/Principal Officer
Graham Gibson, Senior Media Officer
Angela Heaney, Senior Sustainable Development Officer
David Hopper, Sustainable Development Manager
Drew Leslie, Infrastructure Delivery
Lorraine MacGillivray, Regulatory Services
Kevin McCormick, Waste Services
Gillian McKenzie, Accountant
Isabel McKnight, Chief Operating Officer Communities and Performance
Bruce Reekie, Senior Manager – Environment & Place
Brian Roberts, Chief Operating Officer Infrastructure & Environment
Craig Russell, Service Manager – Housing Management Development
Tony Mason, Lead Solicitor (Clerk)
Louise McDonald, Committee Officer (Minutes)

The Convener noted that this was the last meeting for Lorna Cameron, Chief Housing Officer and thanked her for her time with the Council.

EH160 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillor Graham Lambie and Councillor Ross Oxburgh. Councillor Susan McGill was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Lambie and Councillor Alistair Berrill was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Oxburgh.

EH161 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Susan McGill declared an interest in Item 11 (Supplementary Guidance on Biodiversity and Landscape) as previous Chair of Save Gillies Hill.

EH162 URGENT BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE CHAIR

There were no items of urgent business brought forward.

EH163 MINUTES OF MEETINGS – 12 SEPTEMBER 2019

Decision

The Committee approved the Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 September 2019 as a correct record of proceedings.

EH164 ROLLING ACTION LOG

Following a Member query, officers agreed to include revised completion dates within the comments column to reflect slippage.

A Member highlighted EH139 and requested that a response be sought from the Scottish Government.

Decision

The Committee noted the content of the Action Log.

EH165 A811 PETITION UPDATE

The purpose of the report was to further update Elected Members on the improvement works on the A811 and specifically the monitoring of the junction between Station Road, Gargunnoch and the A811 (Appendix 1) in relation to road safety concerns.

Following a discussion around accident statistics and the possible engineering improvements, which would be considered, it was agreed that a meeting with local Members, Community and Landowner would be arranged. Officers also agreed to provide detail on white line installation to Councillor Berrill.

Decision

Committee agreed to:

1. note the level of improvements undertaken at the junction and surrounds of Station Road and the A811;
2. note the level of recorded injury accidents at this location; and
3. note that officers would specifically record activity at this junction and include within the revised Road Safety Plan currently being prepared.

(Reference: Report by Senior Manager – Environment and Place, dated 1 November 2019, submitted)

EH166 PERFORMANCE & STRATEGIC PRIORITIES PROGRESS REPORT

The report contained the Environment & Housing Committee Scorecard that had been redesigned as a result of discussions with Elected Members and Senior Management Teams.

The report presented the latest information on the performance indicators overseen by the Environment & Housing Committee.

Following a Member query regarding debt write off figures, it was noted that overall write off figures were presented to Finance & Economy Committee to be scrutinised. Officers agreed to provide Housing debt write off figures to Committee Members.

Discussion took place around motorist claims and it was agreed by officers that further detail on non-payment of motorist claims would be provided to Committee Members.

A Member queried the January 2018 pot hole claim figures and Officers confirmed that the total financial figure for the 54 pot hole claims settled in January 2018 would be provided to Councillor Earl.

Decision

Committee agreed to note performance of reported indicators within the Committee Scorecard.

(Reference: Joint report by Chief Operating Officer – Infrastructure & Environment and Chief Officer – Housing, dated 15 October 2019, submitted)

EH167 SAFER COMMUNITIES – ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

The report provided an update to the Committee on enforcement action undertaken by the Safer Communities Team (SCT) between 1 July 2019 and 30 September 2019.

Following a discussion around disabled parking bays, it was suggested that more information could be provided to the public to raise awareness of disabilities that were not always visible. Officers agreed to consider awareness raising of hidden disabilities and involvement in hidden disability schemes.

Following a Member query regarding parking tickets, Officers agreed to provide the total financial figure of parking tickets issued and the amount of successful tickets appealed to Councillor MacPherson.

Decision

Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

(Reference: Joint report by Chief Operating Officer – Infrastructure & Environment, dated 28 October 2019, submitted)

EH168 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – PROJECTED OUTTURN 2019/20

Housing Revenue Account

The projected outturn for 2019/20 showed expenditure of £21.963M against a budget of £21.900M. The level of balances retained by the Housing Revenue Account would remain at £986,000.

Housing Investment Programme

The 2019/20 Housing Investment Programme showed expenditure of £17.593M against a budget of £17.431M. The level of new borrowing required for the current year was £0.22M over budget at £6.448M.

Officers responded to a number of question from Members and provided further detail on items within the report.

Decision

Committee agreed to:

1. note that expenditure on the Housing Revenue Account for 2019/20 was £21.963M;
2. note that the year-end retained balances would remain at £986,000;
3. note that expenditure on the Housing Investment Programme was £17.593M; and
4. note that the borrowing requirement for 2019/20 was £6.448M.

(Reference: Chief Officer - Housing, dated 21 October 2019, submitted)

EH169 FORMER PRINTWORKS BLANEFIELD – UPDATE ON REMEDIATION OF CONTAMINATED LAND

The paper provided an update for Committee on the works to decontaminate the former print works in BlaneField, and confirmed that the remediation, reinstatement and drainage works required at 13 residential properties in BlaneField was now complete.

Officers responded to a number of questions from Members and provided further detail on items within the report.

Members thanked Officers for their involvement in the completion of the work to the residential properties in BlaneField.

Decision

The Committee agreed to:

1. note that contamination had been removed and the gardens remediated and reinstated; and
2. note that the project was now complete, with all matters concluded and that there was no longer a Significant Possibility of Significant Harm (SPOSH) to the residents.

(Reference: Report by Chief Operating Officer – Infrastructure & Environment, dated 21 October 2019, submitted)

EH170 SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE ON BIODIVERSITY AND LANDSCAPE

The Team Leader/Principal Officer presented the report to seek approval for Council responses to comments received on previously published Supplementary Guidance (SG) on Biodiversity and Landscape.

If Members approved the finalised version of the document, these would be sent to Scottish Ministers and after 28 days had passed, the Council could formally adopt it unless Scottish Ministers indicated otherwise.

Officers responded to a number of questions from Members and provided further detail on items within the report.

Decision

Committee agreed to:

1. approve Council responses to comments received on draft Supplementary Guidance on Biodiversity and Landscape and for these to be incorporated into finalised Supplementary Guidance, as set out in Appendix 2, to be adopted as part of the Stirling Local Development Plan.

(Reference: Report by Chief Operating Officer – Infrastructure & Environment, dated 21 October 2019, submitted)

EH171 LOCAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY – ANNUAL MONITORING STATEMENT

Stirling Council's Local Transport Strategy (LTS) committed to a yearly update in the form of an Annual Monitoring Statement to report upon the progress of the LTS and its eight key delivery plans. The paper and the appended documents provided the update to Committee.

Over the past year a number of key priorities identified across the 8 delivery plans, which support the core LTS objectives had been progressed. Projects such as the Viewforth Link Road and Active Travel Corridor, the City Region Deal and Sustrans Scotland funded project Walk Cycle Live Stirling, two Community Parking Management Plans and a programme of continuous road safety improvements and 20mph zones had made crucial progress.

Following a Member query regarding street light replacement, Officers agreed to provide Committee Members with the number of streetlights awaiting replacement.

Decision

Committee agreed to:

1. note the content of the Local Transport Strategy Annual Monitoring Statement and the progress made to date; and
2. note the ongoing work in the coming year.

(Reference: Report by Chief Operating Officer – Infrastructure & Environment, dated 21 October 2019, submitted)

EH172 SUSTAINABLE STIRLING – CLIMATE CHANGE DUTIES & SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING

On 3 October 2019 Stirling Council formally recognised the climate emergency. This gave renewed vigour and focus toward the council's actions in relation to carbon reduction and sustainability.

The report fulfils 3 Council requirements as shown below:

1. In line with statutory reporting duties, the Sustainable Stirling report, attached as Appendix 1, required Committee approval as the Council's response to the reporting obligation, prior to submitting to Scottish Government by their 30 November 2019 deadline. The report also provided the means for tracking performance progress in dealing with the carbon reduction and climate mitigation.
2. Appendix 1 also contained the annual update on the Sustainable Growth Agreement (SGA) between Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and Stirling Council. This demonstrated the work done over the last year, and outlined the work planned during 2020/21.
3. The report provided a summary of some key immediate, short-term and medium-term actions that were being progressed and considered was contained within the report and would be developed further as part of the strategic action plans that would be developed over the next 3 months. The strategies and actions plans required to be realigned to the specific challenges and opportunities with the Stirling area, and also aligned with the Scottish Government's target of becoming carbon neutral by 2045 and 75% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030. It also highlighted the Council's intention to engage with the public to help understand people's concerns and priorities associated with climate change and sustainability.

It was highlighted that earlier in the month officers organised the opening of the heat energy capture district heating system, at Forthside, a first of its kind. Officers were also commencing works in a matter of weeks on a world standard solar energy EV charging hub, transforming the park and ride site at Castleview. There would also be the formal launch of the consultation for the Walk Cycle Live Stirling project which would see a world standard cycling and walking green ribbon linking both Stirling's higher education institutes with the city centre and connected communities.

Members thanked officers for their work and also noted that school pupils were very keen to see recycling within schools. Officers noted that feedback had been received from schools and recycling within schools would be encouraged. Pupils would be invited to be involved in discussions with key partners.

Following a Member query regarding the report received from Extinction Rebellion, Officers advised that they would be meeting with the authors of the report received to discuss progression.

Decision

Committee agreed to:

1. approve the draft Sustainable Stirling Report attached in Appendix 1 as Stirling Council's 2018-19 statutory submission to Scottish Government for requirement of the 'Public Bodies' Climate Change Duties Annual Reporting;

2. note the progress in delivering agreed actions within the Sustainable Growth Agreement in Appendix 2, and the actions being taken in recognition of the climate emergency, as set out in section 2.4; and
3. note that a progress report would be brought to Council in February 2020 setting out how the Council would meet its carbon reduction and sustainability commitments following public engagement events during early 2020.

(Reference: Report by Chief Operating Officer – Infrastructure & Environment, dated 6 November 2019, submitted)

EH173 SPEED LIMIT POLICY REVIEW 2019

Following presentation of the A91 (Blairlogie) petition at the Environment & Housing Committee on 6 June 2019, Committee Members requested that a review of the current Stirling Council Speed Limit Policy was undertaken. The report and its appendices presented the findings of that review.

The current Speed Limit Policy was developed and adopted in 2010 following publication of ETLLD Circular No. 1/2006: Setting Local Speed Limits by the Scottish Executive, which laid out recommendations on the setting of local speed limits. This superseded the recommendations given previously in SOID Circular No 1/93. The recommendations apply to the setting of speed limits, other than 20mph speed limits, on single or dual carriageway roads in both urban and rural areas.

The revised Speed Limit Review Policy included changes to 20mph provision guidance as set out in Transport Scotland document, Good Practice Guide on 20mph Speed Restrictions 2016.

Adoption of the review policy would allow Stirling Council to continue the roll out of reduced speed limits in communities whilst providing a framework within which the changes could be implemented safely

Following a query around Speed Cameras, Officers agreed to provide a report on Speed Cameras to a future Committee Meeting.

Decision

Committee agreed to:

1. note the proposed changes to the Speed Limit Policy;
2. note the contents of this report; and
3. approve the proposed changes to the Speed Limit Policy subject to change to 3.8 and addition of walking and cycling roads.

(Reference: Report by Senior Manager – Environment & Place, dated 12 September 2019)

*At 12.40pm the Committee agreed to adjourn
in terms of Standing Order 74*

*The Meeting reconvened at 1.05pm
with all Elected Members (previously noted) present*

EH174 STIRLING COUNCIL WASTE AND RESOURCES PLAN

The purpose of the report was to seek approval on the process to develop a 5 to 10-year Waste and Resources Plan, which detailed a programme of actions and service changes.

Through an internal review of waste collection and disposal via the Waste Transformation Board, the service had identified a number of areas where improvements could be made in order to provide best value and drive efficiencies. These included areas such as collections routing, fleet efficiency and customer engagement.

The finalised Waste and Resources Plan would be subject to an annual report, which would be reported to the Environment & Housing Committee.

Officers responded to a number of questions from Members and provided further detail on items within the report.

Motion

“Committee agreed to:

1. the proposal to develop a Waste and Resources Plan for approval at Environment & Housing in April 2020; and
2. the proposal to conduct a series of engagements with both internal and external stakeholders. “

Proposed by Councillor Jim Thomson and seconded by Councillor Danny Gibson.

Amendment

“The Committee agreed to the Stirling Council Waste and Resources Plan Report being included on the Environment & Housing Committee workplan as a standing item”

Proposed by Councillor Martin Earl and seconded by Councillor Alastair Majury

On the roll being called the Members present voted as follows:-

For the Amendment (3)

Councillor Alistair Berrill
Councillor Martin Earl
Councillor Alastair Majury

Against the Amendment (6)

Councillor Danny Gibson
Councillor Susan McGill
Councillor Alasdair MacPherson
Councillor Alasdair Tollemache
Councillor Jim Thomson
Councillor Evelyn Tweed

The Amendment was rejected by 6 votes to 3 votes.

All Committee Members agreed to move the Motion.

Decision

Committee agreed to:

1. the proposal to develop a Waste and Resources Plan for approval at Environment & Housing in April 2020; and
2. the proposal to conduct a series of engagements with both internal and external stakeholders.

(Reference: Report by Senior Manager – Environment & Place, dated 4 November 2019)

EH175 STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN 2020/21 TO 2024/25

The Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2020/21-2024/25 was presented for Committee approval. It set out the strategic investment priorities for affordable housing to achieve the outcomes set out in Stirling's Local Housing Strategy, which was approved by the Council in December 2012.

The SHIP would be submitted to the Scottish Government which agreed, earlier in 2019, the programme of housing projects for both the Council and Registered Social Landlords developing in the Stirling area that it would fund over 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Following a Member query, Officers agreed that a report on Brownfield Sites would be presented to a future Committee Meeting.

Decision

Committee agreed to:

1. agree the submission of the SHIP 2020/21 to 2024/25 to the Scottish Government based on the projects identified in the SHIP tables subject to detail from Page 13 being shared with Committee Members once available.

(Reference: Report by Chief Housing Officer, dated 21 October 2019, submitted)

EH176 HOUSING ALLOCATIONS' POLICY

The report advised the Committee on the review and proposals for change to the current Allocations' Policy which was compliant with the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014, current policy changes, and supports the delivery of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

Revised policy documents were presented for comment and approval.

The Council's allocation policy must meet all legislative and regulatory requirements surrounding the allocation of housing, and make sure those in the greatest housing need had fair and efficient access to affordable housing.

Following a discussion around the number of houses available it was agreed that Officers would provide tenants with a note of the number of houses available within specific areas to allow them to understand what was available.

Decision

Committee agreed to:

1. approve the revised Allocations policy attached at Appendix 1 with addition of appeal timelimit periods being made mandatory; and
2. approve the allocation of two bedroom properties to single people, a key part of the new policy, to be implemented as soon as practicable.
3. carry out a review of the Allocation policy and report back to Committee 12 months after implementation.

(Reference: Report by Chief Officer – Housing, dated 5 November 2019, submitted)

Councillor Alasdair Tollemache left the meeting after discussion of the above item

EH177 RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN 2019/20 – 2023/24

The report presented Stirling Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

It was highlighted that a Service priority would be for additional outreach support within temporary accommodation buildings and the plan would be for additional support officers to be recruited. Members requested that the service highlight any resource issues to them.

Decision

Committee agreed to approve the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

(Reference: Report by Chief Officer – Housing, dated 4 November 2019, submitted)

EH178 REVIEW OF THE ASSIGNATION, JOINT TENANCY AND SUCCESSION POLICIES

The report advised the Committee of the need to review the Council's policies in relation to assignation, joint tenancy and succession in preparation for the commencement of the outstanding provisions of Part 2 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.

The report explained the existing legislative arrangements and gave details of the changes required by the legislation.

Revised policy documents were presented for comment and approval.

A discussion took place around the changes in legislation and it was noted that tenants were advised of these changes in October 2018 and the information was also available within publications of Open Door. Members requested that a reminder be issued to tenants regarding the change in legislation and Officers agreed.

Decision

Committee agreed to:

1. note the requirement to change the policies in relation to assignation, joint tenancy and succession as set out in the report; and
2. comment on the revised policy documents as attached at Appendices 1, 2 and 3.

(Reference: Report by Chief Officer – Housing, dated 21 October 2019, submitted)

EH179 STIRLING COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICE'S ANNUAL ASSURANCE STATEMENT 2019

The report advised the Committee of the Scottish Housing Regulator's new regulatory framework and in particular, the requirement for Stirling Council to produce an Annual Assurance Statement.

Stirling Council complied with all but one of the statutory obligations at May 2019. The Council's Housing Services did not materially comply with gas safety regulations at that time as the service did not complete 28 (14 unable to gain access to property) of its annual gas safety checks in 2018/19 by the end of May. This was reported to the Scottish Housing Regulator as part of the annual report against the charter. This failure was found to be as a result of administrative and system errors and was rectified immediately. All council homes with gas had up to date gas safety records, following annual safety checks.

Decision

Committee agreed to:

1. note the requirement to produce an Annual Assurance Statement; and
2. approve the Annual Assurance Statement as attached at Appendix 1.

(Reference: Report by Chief Officer – Housing, dated 21 October 2019, submitted)

The Committee resolved under Section 50A (4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 that the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 8, of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

EH180 INVESTING IN NEW HOUSING – NEWPARK FARM, ST NINIANS (PHASE 1)

The report described the development of Newpark Farm, St Ninians which was a key part of the regeneration of Cultenhove and St Ninians. Ogilvie Homes were planning to develop 185 new homes at Newpark Farm. It was proposed that the Council would purchase 10 houses for social rented housing and approval was sought from Environment & Housing Committee.

Members requested the service to encourage the developer to carry out community engagement.

Decision

Committee agreed to:

1. approve the purchase by Stirling Council of 10 properties from the developer at Newpark Farm, St Ninians for the total purchase price of £1,190,000;
2. approve the funding of the remainder of costs after grant of £620,000 from the Council's new build budget; and
3. note the planned purchase of a further 26 properties for purpose of social rented housing in a further two phases at Newpark Farm, at prices and timescales to be agreed with the developer in due course and in accordance with the Section 75 agreement.

(Reference: Report by Chief Officer – Housing, dated 21 October 2019, submitted)

The Convener declared the Meeting closed at 3.10pm