

# STIRLING COUNCIL

**MINUTES of MEETING of the ENVIRONMENT & HOUSING COMMITTEE held as a VIRTUAL MEETING via MICROSOFT TEAMS on THURSDAY 10 JUNE 2021 at 10.00 am**

## **Present**

Councillor Jim THOMSON (Convener)

Councillor Martin EARL

Councillor Scott FARMER (Substitute)

Councillor Danny GIBSON

Councillor Alastair MAJURY

Councillor Susan MCGILL (Substitute from EH257)

Councillor Ross OXBURGH

## **In Attendance**

Stephen Clark, Chief Officer - Housing

Graeme Forrester, Lead Solicitor - Governance

Dan Hartles, Team Leader - Safer Communities

Mark Henderson, Senior Media Officer - External Communications

Linda Hill, Regulatory Service Manager (Secondment) - Housing and Environment

Drew Leslie, Service Manager - Infrastructure

Gillian McKenzie, Accountant - Accounting Operations

Isabel McKnight, Chief Operating Officer - Communities & Performance

Coreen McNeil, Accommodation Manager, Environment Services

Bruce Reekie, Senior Manager - Environment & Place

Brian Roberts, Chief Operating Officer - Infrastructure & Environment

Stephen Swan, Service Manager - Housing Services

Gregor Wightman, Private Sector Housing Manager - Housing Services

David Wilson, Service Manager - Housing Management and Homelessness, Housing

Michelle MacDonald, Governance Officer - (Clerk)

Mary Love, Committee Officer - Governance (Minutes)

## *Recording of Meeting started*

Prior to the commencement of business, Councillor Thomson, as Convener of the Environment & Housing Committee, welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting via MS Teams. A statement was read to the meeting, providing detail on the procedures related to MS Teams and the protocols that both Members and Officers should adhere to throughout the meeting.

The Convener asked the Clerk to carry out a roll call of all Members participating in the meeting.

## **EH248 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillor Alasdair MacPherson, Councillor Alasdair Tollemache and Councillor Evelyn Tweed.

Councillor Susan McGill was in attendance for Councillor MacPherson and Councillor Scott Farmer was in attendance for Councillor Tweed.

## **EH249 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **EH250 URGENT BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE CONVENER**

There were no items of urgent business.

## **EH251 MINUTES OF MEETING – 20 JANUARY 2021 & 11 FEBRUARY 2021**

The Minutes of the Environment & Housing Committee Meeting held on 20 January 2021 and 11 February 2021 were submitted for approval.

### **Decision**

Committee approved the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2021 and 11 February 2021 as a correct record.

## **EH252 ROLLING ACTION LOG**

The Rolling Action Log was submitted for review.

### **Decision**

Committee agreed to note, and remove any actions marked for removal, on the Rolling Action Log.

## **EH253 PERFORMANCE & STRATEGIC PRIORITIES PROGRESS REPORT**

The report by the Chief Operating Officer, Communities & Performance presented the latest information on the performance indicators overseen by the Environment & Housing Committee.

Discussion took place regarding insurance claims received relating to potholes and it was agreed that the Senior Manager, Environment & Place would provide Members with the last 5 years statistics on Number of Insurance Claims Received Relating to Pothole Damage to vehicles.

It was noted that staff safety was an issue and staff were actively encouraged to report incidents, which were reported at Health & Safety Panel meetings.

## **Decision**

Committee agreed to note performance of reported indicators within the Committee Scorecard as noted in Appendix 1 and 2 to the report.

(Reference: Report by Chief Operating Officer, Communities & Performance, dated 3 May 2021, submitted).

## **EH254 COMMUNITY SAFETY TEAM – ENFORCEMENT UPDATE**

The report by the Senior Manager, Infrastructure provided an update to the Committee on enforcement action undertaken by the Community Safety Team between 1 December 2020 and 31 March 2021.

Members congratulated the service for their hard work in changing the shift patterns for officers. The team worked alongside trade unions on developing the pattern and more resources would be put into areas, where needed, to capture demand. The team were deploying earlier in the morning and the deployment plan was being reviewed on a weekly basis, however shifts could be altered at short notice, if required.

In response to a Member's question as to whether a breakdown by ward basis could be provide for penalty charge notices, it was agreed that a one-off 'snap shot' of penalty charge notices by ward area would be provided to Councillor Majury.

Discussion took place regarding engine idling powers and it was agreed that Members would be provided with information on engine idling powers and if Stirling Council was using these powers.

## **Decision**

Committee agreed to note the content of the report.

(Reference: Report by Senior Manager, Infrastructure, dated 12 May 2021, submitted)

## **EH255 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – PROJECTED OUTTURN 2020/21**

The report by the Chief Officer, Housing provided updates on the Housing Revenue Account and Housing Investment Programme.

### **Housing Revenue Account**

The final outturn for 2020/21 showed expenditure of £22.444M against a budget of £22.760M. The level of balances retained by the Housing Revenue account remained at £986,000.

### **Housing Investment Programme**

The 2020/21 Housing Investment Programme showed expenditure of £19.440M against a budget of £18.360M. The level of new borrowing required for the year was £1.146M under budget at £5.761M.

The Chief Officer, Housing introduced the report and responded to a number of questions from Members.

Discussion took place around the impact of COVID-19 on house rental income and in response to a Member's question with regard to how much of the total figure was down to COVID-19, it was noted that this information was gathered from the Northgate Housing System. Some houses had been realigned from the mainstream housing revenue account to the homeless, which would be recorded as different income. Unfortunately the Northgate Housing System did not provide information on the reason why money is not present.

It was noted that some tenants were struggling financially, which had an impact on rent arrears. There had been a spike in arrears in the last year due to the impact of COVID-19, however it was noted that this was not as pronounced in Stirling as in other areas. It was also noted that there was currently a ban on evictions.

### **Decision**

Committee agreed to note that:

1. expenditure on the Housing Revenue Account for 2020/21 was £22.444M ;
2. the year-end retained balances remained at £986,000;
3. expenditure on the Housing Investment Programme was £19.440M; and
4. the borrowing requirement for 2020/21 was £5.761M.

(Reference: Report by Chief Officer, Housing, dated 4 May 2021, submitted).

## **EH256 RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN UPDATE**

The report by the Chief Officer, Housing was being presented to Environment & Housing Committee for consideration as the Council were required to submit an update of our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) to Scottish Government by 30 June 2021.

The Chief Officer, Housing introduced the report and responded to a number of questions from Members.

It was noted that Stirling Council had so far received £404k to support delivery to the plan.

In response to a Member's question on how evictions were managed during COVID-19, it was agreed that the Chief Officer, Housing would discuss with colleagues in Governance regarding the reporting on evictions and what would be appropriate to put before Committee/Members.

Discussion took place regarding how housing officers were offering support through the Housing First method and the Accommodation Manager, Environment Services provided an in depth overview of Housing First cases.

## **Decision**

Committee agreed to:

1. approve the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan Update for submission to the Scottish Government; and
2. note the implications of the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014 (as amended) and actions being taken to comply with the Order.

(Reference: Report by Chief Officer, Housing, dated 7 May 2021, submitted).

## **EH257 A811 – STATION ROAD JUNCTION, GARGUNNOCK UPDATE**

A report by the Senior Manager, Environment & Place noted that at the Environment and Housing Committee on 11 February 2021 it was agreed to defer the report to allow Officers to liaise with the Gargunnoch Community Council and provide feedback to members.

This report provided members with an update on the options for providing road improvements at the junction of Station Road and the A811, at Dasherhead near Gargunnoch, including the feedback from the Community Council.

The Senior Manager, Environment & Place introduced the report and responded to various questions from Members. It was noted that following a meeting with Gargunnoch Community Council, their views were that they did not support options 1 and 3 and they would support option 2 if the project was extended to include improvements to Leckie Road and Manse Brae, which would need to include road widening and would be of similar costs to or more expensive than option 4, which was their favoured option.

An in depth discussion took place regarding all the options and costings associated with them and it was agreed that discussion with the landowner and utilities company should take place to work out a cost analysis of the possibility of moving a wall and diverting electrical utilities apparatus.

## **Decision**

Committee agreed to defer the report to a future meeting of Environment & Housing and instruct officers to further develop Option 4 within the report for consideration.

(Reference: Report by Senior Manager, Environment & Place, dated 31 May 2021, submitted)

The Convener declared the Meeting closed at 11.20am