

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 21 DECEMBER, 2017

Present: Councillors A Stirling (Chair), I Walker (Vice Chair), A Allan, D Beagrie, S Calder, E Durno, P Gibb, A Hassan, A Kille, D Mair, G Reynolds, D Robertson, A Ross and S Wallace.

Officers: Director of Infrastructure Services, Head of Housing, Corporate Finance Manager, Head of Lifelong Learning and Leisure, Service Manager (Governance), Legal and Governance and Senior Committee Officer (Mr N David).

1. SEDERUNT AND DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

The Chair asked members if they had any interests to declare in terms of the Councillors' Code of Conduct. No interests were declared.

2A. PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

In making decisions on the following items of business, the Committee **agreed**, in terms of Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010:-

- (1) to have due regard to the need to:-
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - (c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- (2) Where an Equality Impact Assessment was provided, to consider its contents and take those into account when reaching their decision.

2B. RESOLUTION

The Committee **agreed**, in terms of Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of Items 14, 15 and 16, so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the classes described in the undernoted paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

Item No	Paragraph No of Schedule 7A
14	8 & 10
15	8
16	8 & 10

3. MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE OF 9 NOVEMBER, 2017

There was circulated, noted, approved and thereafter signed by the Chair, the minute of meeting of the Committee of 9 November, 2017.

4. UNIVERSAL CREDIT

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of Aberdeenshire Council of 23 November, 2017 (Item 4), there was circulated a report dated 27 November, 2017, by the Director of Infrastructure Services on the Universal Credit Full Service Rollout.

Members were reminded that following the consideration of a Notice of Motion from Councillor Cassie at the meeting of Full Council on 23 November, 2017, it had been agreed that a presentation be given to the Communities Committee, to which all Councillors would be invited. In this regard, the Housing Manager (Tenancy Services) gave a presentation to the Committee. The presentation covered: the current Universal Credit position in Aberdeenshire; current concerns with Universal Credit; Aberdeenshire Council's approach to the Universal Credit rollout; significant detail on the preparation activities in advance of Universal Credit rollout; future activities; and the challenges being faced and dealt with. A question and answer session followed the informative presentation. The Committee and other Councillors present concurred with the Chair in thanking the Housing Manager (Tenancy Services) for an excellent presentation.

Thereafter, the Committee considered the report and **agreed**:-

- (1) to acknowledge the envisaged impact of Universal Credit full service on the local authority Housing Service,
- (2) to acknowledge the steps being taken to minimise the impact on council house rent arrears,
- (3) to acknowledge the envisaged wider impact, ongoing preparations and joint working for Universal Credit,
- (4) that the Director of Infrastructure Services submit further reports and bulletins to the Committee at appropriate times during Universal Credit full service rollout, and
- (5) that Area Committees, as appropriate, receive preparatory reports ahead of rollout.

5. PROGRESS WITH ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETINGS

There was circulated a report which updated members on progress made with actions agreed at the previous meetings of the Communities Committee held on 15 June, 28 June, and 7 September, 2017

After consideration the Committee **agreed** to note the position with regard to progressing actions from previous meetings.

6. POLICE SCOTLAND – PERFORMANCE REPORT (APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2017)

There was circulated a report dated 24 November, 2017, by the Director of Business Services which provided information on how the Police Service was performing against key performance measures and associated targets, as set out in the Aberdeenshire Police Plan previously approved by the Communities Committee.

The report reminded members that the performance monitoring report provided a regular opportunity for members to maintain scrutiny of significant Police activities, in order to achieve good outcomes for the residents of Aberdeenshire.

The Committee asked questions in relation to: the increase in speeding offences; in respect of Control Room performance; and contact with local Inspectors in the Peterhead area.

Thereafter, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to acknowledge the performance monitoring information relating to the Aberdeenshire component of the North East Division of Police Scotland,
- (2) that the Divisional Commander continue to report to the Communities Committee quarterly on performance measures against service objectives,
- (3) that the Director of Business Services and Chief Superintendent arrange for the Committee to visit the call centre in Dundee, if possible before the next meeting of the Committee, and
- (4) that the Chief Superintendent from C3 be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee to present information on call centre matters.

7. ATTENDANCE OF COUNCILLORS AT CONFERENCES

There was circulated a report dated 23 November, 2017, by the Director of Infrastructure Services on the attendance of Councillors at conferences.

The report explained that the attendance of Councillors at conferences required to be specifically authorised to allow such attendance to qualify as an approved duty. Conferences that were of importance to members of the Communities Committee had been individually reported on as appropriate to allow for authorisation to be sought in each case. However, certain essential conferences were held every year and the attendance of elected members at these conferences was crucial. There was previously a rolling approval for members to attend these conferences, but in more recent years an individual report had been brought to Committee for each conference. This had resulted in committee time unnecessarily being taken up by discussion of these reports.

The report therefore proposed that the following conferences be authorised as approved conferences, negating the need for a report to be brought to Committee to authorise attendance on an annual basis:

Chartered Institute of Housing – suggested attendance by three members, and
Sheltered Homelessness Conference – suggested attendance by three members.

The Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) approve the attendance of three Councillors at each of the conferences detailed above, on the basis of the attendance being the Chair, Vice Chair and a member of the Opposition (subject to substitutes being permitted), and
- (2) note that Councillors who attended approved conferences should provide written feedback on the event to share the learning with colleagues.

8. HOUSING SERVICES QUARTER 2: 2017-2018 PERFORMANCE REPORT AND SERVICE PLAN UPDATE (ABERDEENSHIRE PERFORMS)

There was circulated a report dated 21 November, 2017, by the Director of Infrastructure Services on how the service had performed against key performance measures and associated targets as set out in the Plan covering the period July to September, 2017.

The report explained that the performance measures were linked to the Council's priorities. The quarterly performance monitoring report provided a regular opportunity for members to maintain scrutiny of significant activities in order to achieve good outcomes for the residents of Aberdeenshire.

The report went on to summarise the performance in the areas of key service objectives, namely: to ensure access to good quality, affordable housing; to ensure the service met the outcome for the Scottish Social Housing Charter; and reduction in fuel poverty.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to acknowledge the good performance achieved in quarter 2, as detailed in the report,
- (2) to acknowledge those measures where performance was below expectations in quarter 2, as detailed in the report,
- (3) to acknowledge the publication of the complete July to September, 2017 performance report and Service Plan update on the Council's website,
- (4) to acknowledge the progress made with the actions set out in the Infrastructure Services Service Plan 2017-2020, as detailed in the report,
- (5) that the Director of Infrastructure Services continue to report, by exception, to Committee quarterly on performance measures and service objectives and six monthly on progress in delivering all aspects of the Service Plan, and
- (6) that future reports in this respect to the Communities Committee exclude all non-housing matters.

9. DRAFT HOUSING ADAPTATIONS – UPDATE ON TENURE NEUTRAL MAJOR ADAPTATIONS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Social Work and Housing Committee of 25 February, 2016 (Item 4), there was circulated a report dated 15 November, 2017, by the Director of Infrastructure Services which provided an update on the tenure neutral major adaptations improvement programme.

The report explained that the Scottish Government's Housing Strategy for Older People entitled "Age, Home and Community" 2012-2021 recognised the importance of making the best use of existing housing for older people. The Strategy supported the recommendations of the National Working Group for Adaptations that the current systems for adaptations were unsustainable in light of the ageing population and the subsequent demand this placed on reduced resources. Additionally, the National Working Group for Adaptations recommended efficient and streamlined processes to ensure equity and access and service provision across all housing tenures and with a person-centred approach.

The report went on to explain that the next steps were to agree on key performance indicators. These would be aligned for both the private sector and council housing and may include data on “increased independence” and “average time taken to complete adaptations”.

Thereafter the report went on to provide evidence of the work undertaken by the tenure neutral improvement project and what had been achieved to date.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to acknowledge the progress to date towards the development of a tenure-neutral major adaptations process,
- (2) that further work to improve outcomes be reported to the Communities Committee and the Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board,
- (3) that Area Committees be kept informed as appropriate in advance of the implementation, and
- (4) that the Communities Committee be provided with information bulletin reports on lessons learned throughout the process of implementation.

10. LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2018 to 2023

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Social Work and Housing Committee of 8 November, 2012 (Item 2), there was circulated a report dated 8 December, 2017, by the Director of Infrastructure Services on the Local Housing Strategy 2018 to 2023.

The report explained that the Aberdeenshire Local Housing Strategy 2012 to 2017 had been agreed by the Social Work and Housing Committee at the meeting on 8 November, 2012. In recent months officers had developed a new strategy. All members had been invited to a workshop on 4 October, 2017 to review the evidence from the Aberdeen City and Shire Housing Need and Demand Assessment. Members had also been invited to take part in an online survey on overall priorities for the strategy. Results from the survey and feedback from the workshop demonstrated that members were broadly supportive of the draft set of priorities. This feedback informed the drafting of the strategy during autumn 2017.

The report highlighted that the strategy had taken account of the existing Local Housing Strategy, the guidance on strategy development and the local evidence to provide a set of priorities: affordable housing; energy efficiency, fuel poverty and sustainability; homelessness and housing options; independent living; minority ethnic communities; and private sector.

The report concluded by highlighting that the direction set out in the strategy would help inform the review of the Council's Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and that the strategy had been considered by the six Area Committees and comments included in an appendix to the report.

A copy of the Housing Strategy 2018 to 2023 was included as an appendix to the report.

The Committee **agreed** to approve the Aberdeenshire Local Housing Strategy 2018 to 2023.

11. EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE EXCEPTION REPORTING: JULY - SEPTEMBER, 2017 (ABERDEENSHIRE PERFORMS)

There was circulated a report dated 7 December, 2017, by the Director of Education and Children's Services on how the Service had performed against key performance measures and associated targets as set out in the plan covering the period July to September, 2017.

The report explained that this year was a transition year for Council priorities, and with Education and Children's Services taking the opportunity to revisit service planning processes, this year's Service Plan was a holding one. The performance measures had been reduced in number to reflect this, with the intention of developing a more meaningful set of performance measures for the 2018-2021 Education and Children's Services Service Plan.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to acknowledge the performance achieved from July to September, 2017, as detailed in the report,
- (2) to note the publication of the complete July to September, 2017 performance report on Ward Pages, and
- (3) that the Director of Education and Children's Services continue to report, by exception, to the Communities Committee quarterly performance measures against service objectives.

12. ABERDEENSHIRE CULTURE AND SPORT TRUST – PROGRESS

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of Aberdeenshire Council of 23 November, 2017 (Item 15), there was circulated a report dated 28 November, 2017, by the Director of Education and Children's Services which provided an update with regard to the Aberdeenshire Culture and Sport Trust.

The report reminded members that at the meeting of Aberdeenshire Council on 23 November, 2017 it was agreed that officers put in place arrangements to enable the delivery of culture and sport services through a wholly owned charitable trust from 1 April 2018, subject to certain qualifications which could trigger a reconsideration of this matter by members.

The report provided an update on the implementation plan as an appendix. Further key activities were detailed within the covering report. This included implications for staff; detail on staff engagement; the appointment of trustees; the relationship between the Council and the Trust; support services, including legal advice; the legal status in respect of pensions, charitable status, rates and VAT; and financial analysis.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the progress in delivering the implementation plan,
- (2) to nominate three members to the Appointments Panel for the recruitment of independent Directors to the Trust, as detailed in the report, and that the three members comprise two Administration members and one Opposition member, to be notified to the Head of Lifelong Learning and Leisure as soon as possible, and

- (3) that the Head of Lifelong Learning and Leisure organise a workshop session to consider the management contract, as detailed in the report and the performance management framework as also detailed in the report.

13. CHARGING POLICY 2018/2019

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board of 29 November, 2017 (Item 3), there was circulated a report dated 24 November, 2017, by the Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership on the Charging Policy 2018/2019.

The report explained as background that the Integration Joint Board, in line with the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014, had a number of services delegated to it from Aberdeenshire Council and NHS Grampian. The setting of charges was not delegated to the Integration Joint Board and remained a power held by Aberdeenshire Council. In this respect the Council had agreed, through the Social Work and Housing Committee, that the Integration Joint Board would be a formal consultee on issues that had a direct impact on the Integration Joint Board and its ability to discharge its duty. The Integration Joint Board had therefore met on 29 November, 2017 to consider the charging policy in order to fulfil their role as a consultee to the Communities Committee. A minute from the Integration Joint Board was included as an appendix. Key issues from the discussion by the Integration Joint Board and recommendations had been included in the covering report.

The report highlighted that Aberdeenshire currently had charging policies for non-residential and residential care. The purpose of the charging policy was to explain how charges were made for care and support services.

Following discussion the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) that Aberdeenshire Council move towards full cost recovery as part of its charging policy for all chargeable social care services,
- (2) that the costs and charges for the Aberdeenshire Council have the discretion to set, be increased, as a minimum, each year in line with HM Treasury forecast (September) Retail Price Index,
- (3) to approve the Charging Policy for Non-Residential Care and Support 2018/2019:
 - (i) as detailed in the refreshed charging policy document, appended to the report,
 - (ii) unit costs to be agreed as detailed within the report,
 - (iii) miscellaneous charges to be as detailed in the report,
 - (iv) external charges to be as detailed in the report,
 - (v) the future model of care for the delivery of very sheltered housing to be reviewed and there to be no change in the charging until this is completed and the findings considered by Committee,
 - (vi) capital limits to be agreed, as detailed in the report,
 - (vii) equivalency model to be as detailed in the report, and
 - (viii) deprivation of capital to be as detailed in the report,

- (4) to approve the Charging Policy for Residential Care 2018/2019 to be:-
- (i) as detailed in the report,
 - (ii) residential care charges for existing residents to be phased in in a five year phasing period, as detailed in the report,
 - (iii) residential care charges for new clients to be charged at the new full recovery rate from April 2018, as detailed in the report, and
 - (iv) that officers explore with service users and their families the provision of Christmas gifts to service users in Council residential homes, the decision thereon to be delegated to the Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership, following consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Opposition spokesperson(s).

14. HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP WORK PLAN 2018/2019: TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

There was circulated a report dated 1 December, 2017, by the Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership on the Health and Social Care Partnership Work Plan 2018/2019: Training and Skills Development.

The report reminded members that the Scheme of Governance had introduced changes to the Council's financial management arrangements, including aligning service budget responsibility with the Policy Committees, front loading procurement measures and increasing expenditure thresholds for officers. In this regard the approval of items in the work plan was the first stage of the approval process. The next stage was that to accord with financial regulation 5.3.12, the business case for the item must be approved. Once approved this meant that there was authority to conduct a procurement. All business cases would be produced in an approved format ensuring the same level of professional approach regardless of the value of the contract. Information provided would be in proportion to the value and risk associated within procurement and would include budget availability, need for provision, options considered, role of stakeholders, benefits and risks and planned expenditure schedule.

In this regard the Committee was now being asked to approve the business case for training and skills development to be included in the Adult Services Work Plan for 2018/2019.

The Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) acknowledge the Directorate Plan as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report,
- (2) approve the items on the work plan, identified as falling within the remit of the Committee, as recommended by the Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board, and
- (3) reserve the contract award following the tender process.

15. PROCUREMENT OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY CONTRACT: PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

There was circulated a report dated 20 November, 2017, by the Director of Infrastructure Services on the procurement of an energy efficiency contract for private sector housing.

The report explained that, on 8 June, 2017, Aberdeenshire Council had received a formal offer of grant of the full core allocation of £1,992,312 for funding through the Home Energy Efficiency Programmes Scotland: Area Based Schemes in order to install energy efficiency measures in private sector housing.

The Committee was therefore asked to approve the supplementary items on the Housing Service Work Plan which had been identified as falling within the remit of the Committee.

The Committee **agreed** to:-

- (1) approve the addition to the Housing Service Work Plan previously approved on 30 March, 2017, and as detailed within the report, and
- (2) approve the business case to allow the Service to procure for a contractor to install energy efficiency measures in the private sector using funding awarded by the Scottish Government.

16. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT HOUSING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 28 June, 2017 (Item 4), there was circulated a joint report dated 10 November, 2017, by the Directors of Business Services and Infrastructure Services on the Housing Revenue Account Housing Improvement Programme.

The report reminded members that at the meeting of the Committee on 28 June, 2017, it had been agreed: to appoint contractors to the four year housing improvement programme; to approve call off contracts for the period covering the first year of the framework subject to reaching agreement with the individual contractors; that the Head of Housing, in conjunction with the Head of Property and Facilities Management provide six monthly monitoring reports on the programme to the Communities Committee, with prior consultations through briefings with individual Area Committees whose comments would be fed back through the six monthly monitoring reports; to note the overall notional project costs; and to note that the final project costs would be subject to adjustment to bring it in line with the outcome of the revised housing revenue account business plan process.

The report therefore provided a detailed update to the Committee.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to endorse the current position with regard to the progress on the delivery of the housing improvement programme for 2017-2021,
- (2) to note the forecast expenditure for financial year 2017/2018 on the housing improvement programme,
- (3) that quarterly update reports be provided to the Communities Committee and appropriate Area Committees, and
- (4) that interim exception reports be provided to the Communities Committee and appropriate Area Committees as required.