

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL**SOCIAL WORK AND HOUSING COMMITTEE****WOODHILL HOUSE, ABERDEEN, 10 NOVEMBER, 2016**

Present: Councillors A M Allan (Chair), G Blackett, E Chapman, L Clark, A S Grant, W Howatson, S Lonchay, A K Norrie, P Oddie, S W Pratt (as substitute for Councillor R Christie), E A Robertson, N Smith (as substitute for Councillor T Malone), D Stewart and I Walker.

Apologies: Councillors R Christie and T Malone.

Officers: Director of Infrastructure Services, Acting Head of Housing, Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership, Housing Manager (Strategy), Acting Corporate Finance Manager, Senior Auditor (Mr C Harvey), Senior Solicitor (Mr P Robertson) 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.

Councillor A M Allan declared an interest in Item 5 as a Director of Houseability.

No other 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 50(A)(4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the Public from the meeting during consideration of Item 11 so as to avoid Disclosure of exempt information of the class described in 14 of Part of Schedule 7(A) of the Act.

Housing**3. STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN 2017 - 2022**

There was circulated a report dated 27 September, 2016, by Director of Infrastructure Services on the draft Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2017 – 2022.

The report explained that the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) and Strategic Local Programme (SLP) were part of the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) process. They were the statements of affordable housing investments priorities in each local authority area which would guide the application of Scottish Government and other funding. All local authorities were required to submit a SHIP to the Scottish Government every two years.

The report further explained that the SHIP had been drafted in accordance with the Resource Planning Assumptions 2017-2022, as indicated by the Scottish Government. This funding was intended to enable the delivery of affordable housing and sat alongside the City Region Deal. Over the course of the five year period, potentially 2,516 homes, with around 300 potentially suitable for particular needs households, could be delivered across Aberdeenshire; requiring approximately £135 million in grant funding which was around £40 million more than the resource planning assumptions. Of these 2,516 homes, 1,903 were proposed for social rent, 284 for mid-market rent and 329 for low cost shared equity.

The report concluded by explaining that the SHIP had been presented to the six Area Committees and their comments were included in an appendix. Subject to Social Work and Housing Committee approval, the approved SHIP would be submitted to the Scottish Government by 30 November, 2016. Thereafter the Council would receive feedback from the Scottish Government, which would feed into the following year's investment decisions.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to acknowledge and approve the draft Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2017 – 2022 for submission to the Scottish Government by 30 November, 2016,
- (2) that regular information be presented to Area Committees and the appropriate Policy Committee on implementation of the delivery of affordable housing,
- (3) that officers take a more robust approach in providing Strategic Housing Investment Plan information in the future, and
- (4) that, once available, confirmation of the City Region Deal allocation in respect of affordable housing be reported to the appropriate Committee.

4. TENANCY SUSTAINMENT - UPDATE

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 31 March, 2016 (Item 4, Page 1636), there was circulated a report dated 28 October, 2016, by the Director of Infrastructure Services on Tenancy Sustainment.

The report reminded members that it had been agreed at the meeting on 31 March, 2016 that a further update be provided. The Housing Service monitored a large amount of performance statistical information, some of which was used to populate that annual Scottish Social Housing Charter. Only a small percentage was reported to Committee and was not included within the reporting system, but used extensively as part of continuous improvement and the day to day delivery of services at local level.

The report provided detailed information in respect of length of tenancy; homelessness; family type; housing support; and debts.

Appendices to the report included information in respect of evictions, case studies and also an updated Tenancy Sustainment Action Plan.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed** to acknowledge the detail within the report and that information on Tenancy Sustainment be reported to each Area Committee following the end of financial year 2016/2017.

5. DISABLED PERSONS HOUSING SERVICE – HOUSEABILITY

There was circulated a report dated 5 October, 2016, by the Director of Infrastructure Services on the Disabled Persons Housing Service, Houseability, which provided help and support to disabled people with housing needs throughout Aberdeenshire.

The report explained that the service provided reflected the diversity of requirements for disabled people and was subsequently a one-stop shop, with a comprehensive service providing good quality information, advice, assistance and sign posting, including advocacy where required.

An appendix to the report outlined that the Service had met and had exceeded its target and outlined the contribution to the Local Housing Strategy and Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to acknowledge the work carried out by the Disabled Persons Housing Service Houseability for 2015/2016,
- (2) to approve the future development and progress of Houseability to continue to closely align and support the Local Housing Strategy and Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership in delivering the strategic priorities, as detailed in the report,
- (3) that the report be submitted to the Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board meeting on 23 November, 2016, for information,
- (4) that the Director of Infrastructure Services arrange for similar and appropriate reports to be submitted to all Area Committees and thereafter the Annual Report be submitted to appropriate Committees, to include information on outcomes, and
- (5) that the presentation slides be made available to all members of the Social Work and Housing Committee and that consideration be given to a similar presentation being made to a future meeting of Aberdeenshire Integration Joint Board.

6. HOUSING AND ABERDEENSHIRE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP – STRATEGIC LINKS

There was circulated a report dated 27 September, 2016, by the Director of Infrastructure Services on the strategic links between Housing and Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership.

The report explained that the important and positive impact for an individual in appropriate housing was recognised by the Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership and Housing had been fully involved in the strategic planning of the partnership. The Housing Contribution Statement, approved by the Integration Joint Board in December 2015, now formed part of the Strategic Plan for Health and Social Care and was developed by Housing with its partners to articulate the Housing Sector's fundamental and valuable contribution to the Partnership.

Since the development of the Housing Contribution Statement, Housing had continued to work as an integral part of the strategic planning process with the Aberdeenshire Health and Social

Care Partnership Strategic Planning Group in order to respond to the emerging challenges and to develop and identify its contribution to further enable independent living, prevent hospital admissions and alleviate delayed hospital discharges as well as contributing further to reducing health inequality.

An appendix to the report outlined the housing action areas identified in the Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership Implementation and Change Plan 2016/2017 and reflected the strategic planning and the work of the Housing Sector in contributing to achieving health and wellbeing improvement.

The Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) to acknowledge the detail within the report,
- (2) to approve the continued development of the strategic links between the Housing Sector and the Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership to contribute to the success of health and wellbeing improvement, as set out the Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan and Commissioning Implementation and Change Plan 2016/2017, and
- (3) that a briefing note on Care and Repair be provided to members, detailing information on an Area break down basis.

7. UNDER OCCUPATION GRANT

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of the Committee of 14 June, 2012 (Item 13, Page 395) there was circulated a report by the Director of Infrastructure Services on the Under Occupation Grant.

The report proposed that the current under occupation incentive be replaced with a discretionary scheme where assistance with moving costs and other related expenses could be provided on a case by case basis. For consistency requests would be considered and approved by the Housing Manager (Options and Homelessness) and would only be considered in exceptional circumstances up to a maximum of £2,000. This would mean the Housing Revenue Account only paying for actual expenses. The report outlined some additional criteria which would also be considered.

The budget for under occupation grants in 2016/2017 was £30,000. It was proposed that the discretionary fund budget be set at £10,000 and that a report on outcomes and impact be submitted to the relevant Committee twelve months after implementation.

Following discussion, the Committee **agreed:-**

- (1) in principle to replace the Under Occupation Grant with a discretionary fund to assist tenants in genuine need with moving expenses when downsizing, subject to information on the criteria and definition; and clarification on tenants being required to apply for assistance before accepting an offer, being circulated to all members of the Committee and thereafter approved by the Head of Housing, following consultation with the Chair, Vice Chair and Group Spokespersons, and
- (2) that the Director of Infrastructure Services submit a further report to the appropriate Committee twelve months after the implementation, in order to review impact and outcomes.

8. SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER – LANDLORD REPORT YEAR 3

There was circulated a report dated 28 October, 2016, by the Director of Infrastructure Services which explained that the Scottish Government Social Housing Charter had come into effect on 1 April, 2012.

The report reminded members that the Charter set standards and outcomes that tenants and other users could expect from social landlords.

Appendices to the report provided a comparison with other similar sized landlords in terms of stock numbers, along with commentary and actions against each indicator. A further appendix provided the Scottish Housing Regulator's Landlord Report for Aberdeenshire Council, and a final appendix included the Annual Report to Tenants 2016.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to acknowledge the Scottish Housing Regulator's third Annual Landlord Report on Aberdeenshire Council's performance, and
- (2) that workshops on performance reporting be arranged at Area and Policy Committee level.

9. CONTRACTS FOR SOCIAL CARE SERVICES AWARDED UNDER FINANCIAL REGULATION 5.3.29

There was circulated a report dated 28 September, 2016, by the Chief Officer, Aberdeenshire Health and Social Care Partnership, on Contracts for Social Care Services awarded under Financial Regulation 5.3.29.

The report highlighted that Section 5.3 of the Council's Financial Regulations covered procurement of works, goods or services. The regulations included reporting requirements.

5.3.29 described the Social Work exception which gave the Director of Housing and Social Work delegated authority to make a direct award of contract or extend an existing contract without competition or further competition, where the requirement fell within the Health and Social Services classification designated within Schedule 3 in the Public Contract (Scotland) Regulations 2012.

The Committee **agreed** to note the details of contracts awarded for social care services under the Social Work Exception Regulation during the 2015/2016 financial year, as detailed within the report.

10. INTERNAL AUDIT

There was circulated a report dated 31 October, 2016, by the Chief Internal Auditor on a completed audit relating to the Care at Home System and Service, and setting out the progress by the Service in implementing agreed recommendations.

The Committee **agreed**:-

- (1) to acknowledge the detail within the report and the attached appendix, and
- (2) that with regard to the Day Care Establishments Visits report, if the recommendations were not implemented by the end of December, 2016, information be submitted to the Social and Housing Committee explaining the position.

11. INTERNAL AUDIT

There was circulated a report dated 31 October 2016, by the Chief Internal Auditor on progress made by the Service in implementing agreed recommendations.

The Committee **agreed** to acknowledge the contents of the report.