

THE MORAY COUNCIL
MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE HOUSING COMMITTEE
31 OCTOBER, 1996
COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, ELGIN

PRESENT

Councillors W. Jappy (Chairman), R.J. Laing (Vice-Chairman), M. Anderson, H.M. Cumiskie, A. Farquharson, M.C. Howe, P. Mann, J.M. Shaw and J. Stewart,

IN ATTENDANCE

The Director of Community Services, the Chief Housing Officer, the Senior Area Housing Manager, the Projects Officer - Programming & Planning, the Client Services Manager, the Depute Chief Finance Officer, Mrs Scott, Principal Solicitor (Commercial & Conveyancing) and Mrs P. Davidson, Administration Officer - as Clerk to the Committee.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors T.A. Howe, D. Scaife and G. McDonald (ex-officio).

1. EXEMPT INFORMATION

The Council agreed in terms of Section 50A (4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 as amended, to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the item specified below so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the classes described.

<u>Para. No.</u>	<u>Para. No. of Schedule 7A</u>
16	2
17	9
18	2
19	9
20	9

2. MINUTE OF MEETING OF HOUSING SUB-COMMITTEE DATED 16 OCTOBER, 1996

The Minute of the Housing Sub-Committee Meeting dated 16 October, 1996 was noted and approved.

3. HOUSING CAPITAL INCOME & EXPENDITURE 1996/97

There was submitted a Report by the Director of Community Services informing the Housing Committee of the position with Income & Expenditure for the Housing Capital Programmes for Council housing and private sector housing in 1996/97.

Following consideration, the Meeting agreed:-

- (i) to note the revised spending target for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) as £3.259m and for private sector housing as £0.962m;
- (ii) to increase fees charged by Property Services by 2% which is estimated to be £48,000;
- (iii) to allocate an additional £50,000 to medical replacement heating;

- (iv) to issue the window replacement contracts withheld due to uncertainty over income to a value of £140,000 in accordance with the window priority replacement lists;
- (v) to reduce the provision of expenditure on the Aberlour, High Street flats by £111,000 and instruct Officers to look for alternative housing providers to develop this site; and
- (vi) to advise owner/occupiers in writing on the outcome of the Structural Engineers Report following trials carried out to Cruden Mark I properties.

4. MONITORING REPORT: CAPITAL CONTRACTS

There was submitted a Report by Director of Community Services informing Members of the current capital funded Housing Revenue Account (HRA) contracts awarded for the upgrading and maintenance of the Council Housing stock and on the progress of existing and future contracts.

Following consideration, the Meeting agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report; and
- (ii) to note a Report on the Capital Programmes for 1997/98 will be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee on 12 December, 1996.

5. MONITORING REPORT: REVENUE CONTRACTS

There was submitted a Report by the Director of Community Services informing the Committee of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Revenue contracts awarded for the upgrading and maintenance of the Council's housing stock, including the progress on existing contracts and budget monitoring.

Following consideration, the Meeting agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report; and
- (ii) that the consultation procedure with owner/occupiers regarding share of costs for improvements be reviewed.

6. 1996/97 HRA BUDGET MONITORING REPORT: AT 30 SEPTEMBER, 1996

There was submitted a Report by Director of Community Services informing Members of the budget position at the half year stage with the 1996/97 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and advising on how the remaining savings of £30,000 were achieved.

Following consideration, the Meeting agreed:-

- (i) to note the financial position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) at 30 September, 1996; and
- (ii) to note that the additional savings required to balance the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) had been found from staff savings.

7. NON HRA HOUSING EXPENDITURE

There was submitted a Report by Director of Community Services advising the Committee of the implications for private sector housing in terms of non Housing Revenue Account (HRA) housing expenditure given that the Scottish Office had indicated that private sector funding would no longer be ring fenced and would be part of the Council's General Services Section 94 Consent.

Following consideration, the Meeting agreed:-

- (i) to note the current position of the Council regarding Section 94 Consent from the Scottish Office;
- (ii) to note this means that no further offers of Grant can be made under existing conditions;
- (iii) to note that Officers will communicate with existing grant applicants to advise them of the current situation with regard to the availability of grants;
- (iv) to recommend to Officers that the maximum number of grants be awarded subject to completion of the works by the end of February, 1997;
- (v) to this matter being referred to the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Sub-Committee for resolution; and
- (vi) to recommend to the Policy and Resources Sub-Committee that the income from the sale of existing service plots (where the costs of servicing have been met from the Non HRA account) be ring fenced for private sector housing in the financial year 1997/98.

8. ESTATE MANAGEMENT: QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE STATEMENT

There was submitted a Report by Director of Community Services inviting the Committee to note the quarterly position statement on Housing Management performance.

Following consideration, the Meeting agreed to note the Report and progress made by the Area Teams to date.

9. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING GRANTS: MEANS TESTING PROGRESS REPORT

There was submitted a Report by Director of Community Services advising the Committee of the means test to be used to assess requests for Disability Grants and the proposed adjustment to the current criteria of the means test assessment used to determine applicants' entitlement to receive grant.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) that applicant's capital is taken into consideration on the basis of £1 income for every £250 capital after disregard of the first £3,000;
- (ii) that the revised assessment criteria be adopted and applied to all new applications for grant from 1 November, 1996 where means testing is applied; and
- (iii) that the implementation of this decision is subject to the overall concerns relating to the Section 94 Consent of the Council.

10. SURPLUS DEFENCE HOUSING EXECUTIVE HOUSES: PROGRESS REPORT

There was submitted a Report by Director of Community Services informing the Committee of progress made in negotiations with the Defence Housing Executive (DHE) of the lease of surplus housing stock in Forres and Lossiemouth.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the Council will not be entering into a leasing agreement directly with the Secretary of State for Defence (i.e. the Defence Housing Executive) for their surplus housing stock in Forres and Lossiemouth;
- (ii) to note that Street Wise is prepared to lease houses from the Defence Housing Executive in Forres and Lossiemouth and accept nominations for these properties from the Council; and

- (iii) to the Council entering into a Minute of Agreement for 10 properties in Forres and 10 flats and maisonettes in Lossiemouth to cover the nomination process from the Council to Street Wise.

11. JOINT VENTURES: NORTH LESMURDIE SITE: PROGRESS REPORT

There was submitted a Report by Director of Community Services informing the Committee of the current position in relation to the development of the Joint Venture Site at North Lesmurdie and setting out proposals for the completion of this site.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve the development of the remaining 4 sites at the North Lesmurdie Joint Venture Site being packaged together and the development put out to competition in the private sector for the provision of private housing, rented housing and the play area;
- (ii) to approve the re-establishment of the Development Brief Team for Lesmurdie with a view to developing the Site Briefs and Competition Rules for this project;
- (iii) to an approach being made to the Scottish Office with a view to transfer of the land at nil value; and
- (iv) to note the revised Development Brief will be brought back to the Housing Committee and Technical and Leisure Services Committee for approval.

12. HOUSING BENEFIT REVIEW 1995/96

There was submitted a Report by the Depute Chief Executive (Finance & IT) providing Members with information on the administration of Housing Benefits and relevant statistical data for 1995/96.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note the information provided in the Report.

13. SOCIAL HOUSING: LARGE SCALE VOLUNTARY TRANSFERS OF HOUSING AND LOCAL HOUSING COMPANIES

There was submitted a joint Report by the Legal and Administration Services Manager and Chief Housing Officer informing the Committee of the outcome of the one day seminar on the subject of Large Scale Voluntary Transfer and Local Housing Companies held at Dunblane on Friday, 20 September, 1996. The Report recommended that, in light of the fact that many of the principles and criteria applicable to consideration of the transfer of housing stock are equally applicable to the evaluation and selection of a provider for Housing Management Services within the Housing Management CCT process, the Committee's decision to undertake a cost benefit analysis on stock transfer in Moray (para 13 of Minute of this Committee dated 8 August, 1996 refers) be extended to incorporate an evaluation of local housing companies and how they might be structured and regulated.

Suspension of Standing Orders

On the motion of the Chairman the Meeting unanimously agreed to the suspension of the Standing Orders in light of the Government and Labour Party plans for the future provision of social housing which were discussed at the seminar.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed that the decision made by the Housing Committee on 8 August, 1996 (para 13 of Minute refers) to undertake a cost benefit analysis on stock transfer in Moray be extended to incorporate an evaluation of local housing companies and how they might be structured and regulated.

14. CONFERENCE: 'HEARTS & MINDS' 25 - 28 FEBRUARY, 1997 AT DUNDEE

There was submitted a Report by Director of Community Services informing the Committee of the Chartered Institute of Housing in Scotland's Annual Conference 'Hearts & Minds' to be held in the Caird Hall, Dundee from 25 to 28 February, 1997 and seeking the Committee's determination on representation from The Moray Council.

Following consideration the Committee agreed:-

- (i) that the Council be represented at the Conference by the Chairman, Councillor W. Jappy, 1 other SNP representative and 1 Labour or Independant representative whom failing; and
- (ii) that any other Members wishing to attend the conference as day delegates contact the Chief Housing Officer.

15. SUPERIOR'S CONSENTS GRANTED

There was submitted a Report by the Legal and Administration Services Manager informing Members of Superior's Consents approved under delegated powers.

Following consideration, the Committee noted the list of Superior's Consents which had been granted for September, 1996.

16. EVICTIONS ARRANGED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

There was submitted a Report by Director of Community Services informing Members of progress on the evictions which had been arranged under delegated powers.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note the outcome of the evictions which had been arranged under delegated powers.

17. HOUSING MANAGEMENT CCT: CONTRACT PACKAGING

There was submitted a Report by Director of Community Services outlining to the Committee the options available for the packaging of the Housing Management CCT Contract.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to development of a comprehensive housing service to form the basis of the tendering process;
- (ii) to adoption of Authority-wide Housing Management Contracts as the means of forming the contract packaging for the above; and
- (iii) to note that a further report will be submitted to this Committee once information is received from the Scottish Office on whether one or two contracts are required.

18. HOUSES OCCUPIED BY SERVING FIREMEN AT BIBBY PLACE AND HAUGH ROAD ELGIN

There was submitted a joint Report by the Directors of Economic Development and Planning and Community Services seeking the Committee's approval for a proposal to lease 7 houses at Bibby Place and 2 houses at Haugh Road, Elgin to serving firemen and to consider transferring the houses at Bibby Place to the Housing Revenue Account or disposing of them in the event of any of them being vacated.

Following consideration, the Meeting agreed:-

- (i) to approve the lease of the properties at Haugh Road to the serving firemen currently occupying the houses from 1 April, 1996, thereby creating secure tenancies under the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987;
- (ii) to note that the management of the houses in Bibby Place by the Housing Division of Community Services will incur a management fee which will be agreed between the two Directors; and
- (iii) to refer the Report to the Economic Development and Planning Committee Meeting on 5 November, 1996 recommending:-
 - (a) they agree to retain the Bibby Place houses on Economic Development and Planning account and lease these properties to the serving firemen occupying the houses from 1 April, 1996;
 - (b) that, subject to clarification requested from the Scottish Office regarding stock transfers, they agree that, in the event of any of the Bibby Place houses falling vacant they be first offered for transfer to the Housing Revenue Account and, in the event of them not being transferred, they be disposed of on the open market; and
 - (c) they note that the management of the houses in Bibby Place by the Housing Division of Community Services will incur a management fee which will be agreed between the two Directors.

19. SALE OF BOUNDARY WALL AT 33 HIGH STREET, ARCHIESTOWN

There was submitted a Report by the Director of Economic Development and Planning seeking the Committee's approval for the sale of the boundary wall of the former council house at 33 High Street, Archiestown to the adjoining proprietor at 31 High Street.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to approve the sale of the boundary wall between 31 and 33 High Street, Archiestown to the proprietors of 31 High Street on the basis of the provisionally agreed terms.

20. REQUEST TO PURCHASE GROUND ADJACENT TO 2 BRINUTH PLACE, ELGIN

There was submitted a Report by the Director of Economic Development and Planning requesting Members consider a request to purchase an area of ground extending to 104m² or thereby adjacent to 2 Brinuth Place, Elgin which is currently part of a concrete hardstanding parking area held on the Housing Account.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to defer decision pending a site visit.