

THE MORAY COUNCIL
MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 24 JUNE 2014

COUNCIL OFFICE, ELGIN

Present

Councillors E. McGillivray (Chair), R. Shepherd (Deputy Chair), G. Alexander, J. Allan, G. Coull, G. Cowie, P. Gowans, M. Howe, B. Jarvis, J. MacKay and A. Wright (ex-officio).

Mr S Christie and Mr H Torry, Tenant Representatives.

Apologies

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Ms K. Holmes (Tenant Representative) and Councillors S. Cree, M. McConachie and S. Morton.

In Attendance

The Acting Corporate Director (Environmental Services), the Head of Housing and Property, the Head of Financial Services, the Acting Housing Needs Manager, the Housing Strategy and Development Manager, the Area Housing Manager (West), the Building Services Manager, the Asset Manager, the Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator, the Senior Policy Officer, Mrs F. Geddes, Housing Strategy Officer, Ms H. Sharp, Housing Policy Officer, the Central Admin Team Leader and Mr D. Westmacott, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the Committee.

1. DECLARATION OF GROUP DECISIONS

In terms of Standing Order 20 and the Councillor's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations from group leaders or spokespersons in regard to any prior decisions taken on how members will vote on any item on the Agenda nor any declarations of Members Interest in respect of any item on the Agenda.

2. EXEMPT INFORMATION

The Meeting agreed, in terms of Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, that the public and media representatives be excluded from the Meeting during consideration of the Items of Business appearing at the relevant paragraphs of this Minute as specified below so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the appropriate paragraph of Part I of Schedule 7A of the Act.

3. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Committee noted that no written questions had been submitted.

4. LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY REVIEW 2013/14

Under reference to paragraph 8 of the minute of this Committee on 23 April 2013, there was submitted a report by the Acting Corporate Director (Environmental Services) informing the Committee of progress on the outcomes of the Local Housing Strategy 2013-2018.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:-

- (i) note the progress made on achieving the planned actions and outcomes of the Local Housing Strategy 2013-2018, as detailed in Sections 4 and 5 of the report; and
- (ii) approved the updated Local Housing Strategy Action Plan, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

5. SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR THEMATIC INQUIRY – HOUSING OPTIONS IN SCOTLAND

There was submitted a report by the Acting Corporate Director (Environmental Services) presenting the main findings of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Thematic Inquiry on housing options, published on 9 May 2014. A summary of the Regulator's recommendations for local authorities was provided as Appendix 1 to the report.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the main findings of the Scottish Housing Regulator in its thematic inquiry in housing options, as detailed in Section 4 of the report; and
- (ii) the actions identified in Section 5 and Appendix I of the report to address the recommendations of the Scottish Housing Regulator.

6. HOUSING AND PROPERTY SERVICES – BUDGET MONITORING 2013/14

Under reference to paragraphs 2 and 6 of the minute of The Moray Council dated 13 February 2013, there was submitted a report by the Acting Corporate Director (Environmental Services) presenting the unaudited near actual outturns for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and General Services Other Housing Budget for the period to 31 March 2014.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note the provisional budget monitoring report for the Housing Revenue Account and General Services Other Housing Budget for the period to 31 March 2014.

7. HOUSING INVESTMENT 2013/14

There was submitted a report by the Acting Corporate Director (Environmental Services) informing the Communities Committee of the unaudited position to 31 March 2014 for the Housing Investment Programme for 2013/14.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the provisional position as at 31 March 2014 with regards to the completion of the Housing Investment Programme for 2013/14, as detailed in Paragraph 3.2 of the report; and
- (ii) that revisions to any individual budgets within the Housing Investment Strategy for 2014/15 will be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee for consideration following the analysis of the position at the end of Quarter 1.

8. ALLOCATIONS POLICY ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2013/14

Under reference to paragraph 13 of the minute of this Committee dated 18 June 2013, there was submitted a report by the Acting Corporate Director (Environmental Services) presenting annual performance in relation to the operation of the Council's Allocations Policy in 2013/14.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) note annual performance in relation to the operation of the Council's Allocation Policy in 2013/14; and
- (ii) the allocations quotas for 2014/15, as set out in paragraph 10.2 of the report.

9. DOWNSIZING INCENTIVE SCHEME ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

Under reference to paragraph 16 of the minute of this Committee dated 18 June 2013, there was submitted a report by the Acting Corporate Director (Environmental Services) presenting the second annual report on the Council's downsizing incentive scheme for 2013/14.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note progress achieved in managing the downsizing scheme during 2013/14, as detailed in Section 5 of the report;
- (ii) the proposed actions to further develop and market the scheme during 2014/15, as detailed in Section 6 of the report; and
- (iii) to note an annual budget of £50k to operate the downsizing scheme has already been agreed for 2014/15.

10. COUNCIL NEW BUILD LETTINGS PLAN

Under reference to paragraph 4 of the minute of this Committee dated 27 August 2013, there was submitted a report by the Acting Corporate Director (Environmental Services) providing the Committee with details of allocations carried out under the new build lettings plan between 1 January and 31 March 2014.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to note:-

- (i) the detail of the allocations to new build properties between 1 January and 31 March 2014, as detailed in Section 4 of the report; and
- (ii) that reports relating to allocations made under Phase 4 of the Council's new build programme will be reported on a quarterly basis to this Committee.

11. HOUSING PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTERS 3,4 AND ANNUAL 2013/14

Under reference to paragraph 19 of the minute of this Committee dated 23 April 2014, there was submitted a report by the Acting Corporate Director (Environmental Services) outlining the performance of the Housing Service for the period 1 October 2013 to 31 March 2014 and for the year 2013/14.

In response to queries from the Committee, the Head of Housing and Property agreed to circulate a note to the Committee detailing the number of caravans and people within unauthorised gypsy/travellers encampments and costs associated with cleaning up once encampments have been vacated.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to welcome the good performance within the Housing Service, as outlined in Paragraph 4.3 of the report;
- (ii) to note performance, as outlined in Section 4 of the report;
- (iii) to note the actions being taken to seek improvements where required, as detailed in Paragraph 4.4 of the report;
- (iv) the targets proposed for 2014/15, as set out in Section 6 of the report; and
- (v) note that a note would be circulated to the Committee detailing the number of caravans and people within unauthorised gypsy/travellers encampments and costs associated with cleaning up once encampments have been vacated.

12. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING SCHEME OF ASSISTANCE CUSTOMER FEEDBACK 2013/14

Under reference to paragraph 4 of the minute of the Housing Sub-Committee dated 5 March 2010, there was submitted a report by the Acting Corporate Director

(Environmental Services) presents the results of feedback from clients provided with services delivered by the Private Sector Home Improvement Team under the Council's Private Sector Scheme of Assistance (SofA) during 2013/14. A summary of the results from the customer feedback survey was provided as Appendix 1 of the report.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the results of customer feedback received on the Council's Private Sector Scheme of Assistance (SofA) during 2013/14, as detailed in Section 4 and Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (ii) that the customer feedback results for 2014/15 will be presented to the Committee during 2015.

13. COMMUNITY SAFETY AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR STRATEGY PERFORMANCE 2013/14

Under reference to paragraph 13 of the minute of this Committee dated 23 April 2013, there was submitted a report by the Acting Corporate Director (Environmental Services) providing the Committee with an update of Community Safety & Antisocial Behaviour Strategy performance for the fiscal year 2013/14 and on actions undertaken by Community Safety Groups in relation to tackling Community Safety priorities.

The Committee joined the Chair in commending the continued good work of Community Wardens.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed to:-

- (i) commend the continued good work of Community Wardens;
- (ii) welcomed performance against Community Safety & Antisocial Behaviour Strategy indicators noted as performing well, as detailed in Section 5 of the report;
- (iii) note the measures and activity being undertaken in relation to indicators requiring action, as detailed in Section 6 of the report; and
- (iv) approve the recommended amendments to the performance indicators for 2014/15, as set out in Section 8 and Appendix 3 of the report.

14. TRIBUTE TO MRS JILL STEWART

The Committee, in noting that this would be the last meeting of the Committee prior to the Acting Corporate Director (Environmental Services) retiring from the Council, joined the Chair in paying tribute to Mrs Stewart for her contribution to the delivery of Council services in Moray, congratulated her on receiving an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for services to Council housing in Moray and wished her a long and happy retirement.

15. QUESTION TIME

Councillor Shepherd sought an update on identifying suitable locations for potential halting sites for travelling communities.

In response, the Acting Corporate Director (Environmental Services) advised that no instructions had been issued to continue investigations following the last investigation that concluded in 2010. She advised that, in her opinion, the Council had exhausted examination of land that it currently owns and that any further investigation would need, by necessity, liaison with other land owners.

16. BUILDING SERVICES TRADING OPERATION BUDGET 2013/14 – BUDGET MONITORING AND 2014/15 BUDGET (PARA 9)

Under reference to paragraph 25 of the minute of this Committee dated 23 April 2013, there was submitted a report by the Acting Corporate Director (Environmental Services) presenting the unaudited financial year end budget monitoring information for the period to 31 March 2014, as well as the 2014/15 budget for the Building Services Trading Operation.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the unaudited financial information for the Building Services Trading Operation as at 31 March 2014, as detailed in Section 5 and Appendix 1 of the report;
- (ii) to note the reasons for the reduction in surplus, as detailed in Section 6 of the report;
- (iii) the proposed Building Services Trading Operation Budget for 2014/15, as set out in Section 8 and Appendix II of the report; and
- (iv) to note the financial changes in relation to future budgetary regulation, reporting and monitoring arrangements, as detailed in Section 7 of the report.