

**THE MORAY COUNCIL**  
**MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE HOUSING SUB- COMMITTEE**

**FRIDAY 16 OCTOBER 2009**

**COUNCIL OFFICE, ELGIN**

**PRESENT**

Councillors E McGillivray (Chairman), S. Cree and B. Jarvis

Tenant Reps: - Mr S. Christie, Mr R. Taylor and Mr D. Wood.

**APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors G. Leadbitter, J. Mackay, M. McConachie, F. Murdoch, R. Shepherd and D. Stewart.

Tenant Rep:- Mrs H Anderson

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE**

Councillor A. Wright (ex-officio)

**IN ATTENDANCE**

The Chief Housing Officer, Senior Area Housing Manager, Capital Programmes Manager, Housing Strategy & Policy Manager, Liz Thomson, Area Housing Officer (in respect of Item 1 only), Mr P Nevin, Trainee Solicitor, and Mrs C Carswell, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the Committee.

**1. PRESENTATION ON ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

The Senior Area Housing Manager gave a presentation on how the Council deals with the anti-social behaviour of their tenants.

The meeting noted the following answers from the Senior Area Housing Manager in response to members questions:-

- a) all new build houses would be built with strict sound regulations, the Council would also tend not to put different types of tenancies together and would look at keeping families, pensioners, single people separately;
- b) that anti-social behaviour would appear to be low in comparison to other authorities/landlords; and

- c) when drugs are listed in the league tables this would mean drug dealing whereas someone taking drugs may lead to other types of anti-social behaviour.

## **2. DECLARATION OF GROUP DECISIONS AND MEMBERS INTERESTS**

In terms of Standing Order 20 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct the meeting noted that 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.

## **3. WRITTEN QUESTIONS**

The Sub-Committee noted that no written questions had been submitted.

## **4. FLOODING IMPACT ON RESIDENTS AND HOUSING**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Community Services providing an update to the Housing Sub Committee of the consequences of the flooding in Moray on 4 September 2009 for the Moray Council's housing stock in affected areas and for the Council's wider responsibilities in relation to housing affected.

Councillor McGillivray, was joined by other Councillors, in commending the staff for the work which they had undertaken and were continuing to undertake to help those who had been flooded.

The meeting noted the following answers from the Chief Housing Officer in response to members questions:-

- a) the floodgates were used as a last line of defence and given the pressure of the water this could then break the water seals. If neighbouring properties, possibly owner occupiers, do not have the floodgates, then water could ingress to the Council's properties. A meeting was to be held with the manufacturers in order to gauge their effectiveness but it was felt that they did contribute in some way to reducing the extent of damage in properties; and
- b) the floods would not have an impact on those tenants already on the waiting lists for new kitchens within the housing investment programme. The monies for the remedial works in connection with the flood would be taken from the flood reserve fund.

Thereafter, the Sub-Committee:-

- (i) noted the impact of the flooding on residents and housing in Moray;
- (ii) noted the arrangements in place to provide temporary accommodation to those affected;

- (iii) agreed that further reports as indicated in paragraphs 4.8 and 5.2 of the report would be presented to a future Sub-Committee meeting; and
- (iv) agreed that reports would be provided to each Sub-Committee to appraise the Sub-Committee of progress in remedying the damage to properties.

## **5. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE RENT SETTING POLICY**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Community Services presenting to Housing Sub Committee to advise them of a report that was presented to Communities Committee on 6 October 2009.

Mr Christie advised that, in his opinion, in comparison with other housing associations, the Council's rents were still the lowest and he could not foresee any problems.

Following consideration, the Sub-Committee agreed to note the content of the report.

## **6. HOUSING BUDGET MONITORING - 2009/10**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Community Services presenting budget monitoring for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to 31 August 2009 to the Sub Committee for its interest.

Mr Christie stated that in the past responses have been poor to the consultation regarding rent increases and he would like to see tenants having more input as it would be in their best interests.

Following consideration, the Sub-Committee:-

- (i) noted the budget monitoring report for the period to 31 August 2009; and
- (ii) agreed the approach to consultation with tenants on any rental increase for 2010/11.

## **7. HOUSING INVESTMENT 2009/10**

There was submitted and noted a report by the Director of Community Services informing the Housing Sub Committee of the position to 31 August 2009 for the Housing Investment Programme for 2009/10.

## **8. 2009 MORAY TENANTS CONFERENCE**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Community Services giving feedback on the annual tenants conference 2009 to Housing Sub Committee.

Councillor McGillivray paid tribute to Mr French who had recently passed away as he had been a stalwart and integral part in the past of the conference and had been the person who had set up the website. Councillor McGillivray thanked the Tenant Forum Group for all their hard work in producing a successful conference.

Mr Christie advised that the figures were up on last year and had been surprised at the amount of tenant participation.

Following consideration, the Sub-Committee noted the contents of the report.

## **9. COUNCIL HOUSE NEW BUILD - PHASE 2**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Community Services presenting details of the bid submitted to the Scottish Government for financial assistance to enable a second phase of Council new build.

The Chief Housing Officer advised that all income to the Housing Revenue Account came from rent and they could not operate the HRA in deficit. She was confident that with robust monitoring, the approach was feasible. The figures in the report presented 'a worst case' scenario.

Following consideration, the Sub-Committee:

- (i) noted the bid submitted to the Scottish Government; and
- (ii) agreed that a further report on the outcome of the bid would be presented to a future meeting.

## **10. HOUSING SUB COMMITTEE DATE FOR 2010**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Community Services seeking approval to schedule the dates for the Housing Sub Committee in 2010.

The Chief Housing Officer advised that the meeting in May should read the 28<sup>th</sup>.

Following consideration the Sub-Committee agreed the dates for Housing Sub-Committee in 2010.

## **11. QUESTION TIME**

In response to a question from Councillor Cree that if tenants were on the list to have their kitchens refitted, could tenants carry out the works themselves ahead of the scheduled date to a satisfactory standard and be recompensed, the Chief Housing Officer advised that this would be looked at and given consideration but given the current workload with regard to flooding she advised that this would not be reported back on until the second quarter of next year.

Mr Christie advised that their consultation site has been renamed to “Moray Council Direct” and that they would like the Council to put information direct on to the dedicated tenant site. Mr Christie said that he would discuss this further with the Housing Strategy & Policy Manager and the Housing Programmes Manager.