

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

FRIDAY 10 DECEMBER 2009

COUNCIL OFFICE, ELGIN

PRESENT

Councillors E. McGillivray (Chairman), S. Cree, M. McConachie, J. Mackay, F. Murdoch, R. Shepherd and D. Stewart.

Tenant Reps: - Mr S. Christie, Mr M. Pirie and Mr R. Taylor

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors B. Jarvis and G. Leadbitter. Ms H. Anderson, Mrs H. Milne and Mr D. Wood.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor A. Wright (ex-officio)

IN ATTENDANCE

The Chief Housing Officer, Capital Programmes Manager, Senior Area Housing Manager, Housing Strategy & Policy Manager, Senior Solicitor (Commercial & Conveyancing) and Mrs C Carswell, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the Committee.

1. 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.

2. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

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

3. 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 recent flooding in

Moray for the Council's housing stock in affected areas and for the Council's wider responsibilities in relation to housing affected.

The Chief Housing Officer advised that 26 properties would be suitable for occupation before Christmas and the remaining properties would be ready for occupation by the end of February. She further advised that almost half of the tenants who had indicated that they did not wish to return to their homes had been allocated properties outwith the flood area and this was a significant achievement. The report also highlighted that there would be difficulties encountered in rehousing households who require three bedroom ground floor properties as these were not widely available in Elgin or indeed Moray as a whole and a report would be brought back in February to consider the implications regarding this issue more fully.

Mr Christie wished to thank those in Housing and Housing DLO for getting tenants back into their homes and this had been dealt with expediently.

Following consideration the Sub-Committee noted:

- (i) the progress achieved in remedial works and the projected completion periods for remedial works.
- (ii) the position of tenants seeking transfers will be reviewed at the next meeting, in the light of progress achieved;
- (iii) that a further progress report would be presented to the next Housing Sub Committee meeting.

4. SHOWER INSTALLATIONS

There was submitted a report by the Director of Community Services asking the Sub Committee to agree the approach to the method of prioritising fitting showers in tenants' homes under the proposed 2010 / 11 Shower Installation Programme within the Investment Strategy.

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

- a) there would be an article within the tenants voice newsletter regarding the annual rent increases and rent increases associated with the shower installations. There had been no adverse feedback regarding the initial intimations of rent increases involved with shower installations but if there was feedback then there could be a further report brought to the Sub-Committee; and
- b) there would require to be an occupational therapist assessment made of those who may be requiring bath aids. At present they are only looking at over the bath showers.

Following consideration the Sub Committee agreed

- (i) the proposed method of prioritisation contained within the report; and

- (ii) the approach to the prioritisation of applicants for the shower installation programme.

5. 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 30 September 2009

In response to a question from Councillor Cree as to whether Housing have been able to carry out works regarding flood within the £250,000 budget or if there have been monies taken from other areas, the Chief Housing Officer advised that since the 2002 flood, £0.250m had been set aside each year as a reserve fund against a future flood event. It was projected that £0.900m would require to be drawn down from the reserve therefore there would be no negative impact on the housing budget.

Following consideration the Sub-Committee noted:-

- (i) the budget monitoring report for the period to 30 September 2009; and
- (ii) the project outturn for 2009 / 10.

6. 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 30 September 2009 for the Housing Investment Programme for 2009/10.

7. DRAFT HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN 2010 / 11

There was submitted a report by the Director of Community Services seeking comments from the Housing Sub Committee on the Draft Housing Investment Plan for financial year 2010 / 11.

The Capital Programmes Manager gave a presentation on the background work done to compile the Housing Investment Plan 2010/11.

Following consideration, the Sub Committee agreed the draft Housing Investment Plan 2010/11.

8. HOUSING QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT - 2ND QUARTER 2009 / 10

There was submitted a report by the Director of Community Services outlining the performance of the Housing Service for the period 1 July to 30 September 2009

Following consideration the Sub-Committee:

- (i) noted the performances outlined in the report;
- (ii) noted the actions being taken to seek improvements where required; and
- (iii) agreed on the new format and content of the report.

9. IMPROVEMENTS TO PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IN ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

There was submitted a report by the Director of Community Services presenting details of improvements made by the Area Housing Teams in the management of anti social behaviour and seeks approval for further changes.

Following consideration the Sub Committee:

- (i) agreed the draft questionnaire (Appendix I); and
- (ii) agreed that a further report on feedback received would be presented in April 2010;

10. QUESTION TIME

Mr Christie commented that the issue which had been raised at the Communities Committee regarding frozen pipes had been discussed at the Core Group and they felt that if someone knowingly leaves their pipes unprotected then there should be some form of recharge as it has been highlighted to tenants in the newsletter, handbook and website. The Chief Housing Officer advised that they would look at approaches in other authorities but she would urge caution as eg. in some instances people may have been hospitalised urgently. She advised that the feasibility in recouping costs would be investigated and it was hoped to get a discussion paper put to the Communities Committee and Housing Sub Committee in February.

In response to a question from Councillor McConachie regarding an update on the Council house new build, the Chief Housing Officer advised that Phase 1 has been given planning consent with conditions and the Council were in the process of acquiring the site and it was hoped to start work at the end of January 2010. With regard to Phase 2, an announcement has not yet been made regarding whether the Council has been successful in its bid but it was hoped that a report would be taken to the Communities Committee and Housing Sub Committee in February.

In response to a question from Councillor Shepherd regarding St Andrews Hotel, Buckie, the Chief Housing Officer advised that there were legal issues between Langstane and the Developer but the Council would be leasing ten properties from Langstane and were in the process of equipping the properties which should be in use shortly.

Mr Christie wished to thank all housing teams for their support, in particular within the past six months. He would also like to thank those Councillors who attend and support their meetings.