

Minute of Meeting Communities and Housing Policy Board

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday, 22 August 2023	13:00	Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN

Present: Councillor Jacqueline Cameron, Councillor Carolann Davidson, Councillor Gillian Graham, Councillor Lisa-Marie Hughes, Councillor Robert Innes, Councillor Alec Leishman, Councillor Mags MacLaren, Councillor Colin McCulloch, Councillor Janis McDonald, Councillor Cathy McEwan, Councillor Jamie McGuire, Councillor Marie McGurk, Councillor Iain McMillan, Councillor John McNaughtan, Councillor Emma Rodden

Chair

Councillor McGurk, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

G McNeil, Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure; L McIntyre, Head of Policy & Partnerships (Chief Executive's); L Feeley, Head of Housing Services, G Hannah, Head of Climate, Public Protection & Roads, T Irvine, Homeless & Housing Support Services Manager, N Drummond, Lead Officer (Environmental Co-ordination), C Hunter, Environmental Health Public Health Manager, I McKinnon, Mixed Tenure Manager, K Dalrymple, Development Plans & Housing Strategy Team Leader, K Sillars, Housing Maintenance Manager, C Robertson, Warden Services Manager, D Murray, Area Housing Manager and R Walkinshaw, Housing Regeneration & Development Manager (all Environment, Housing & Infrastructure); and J Kilpatrick, Finance Business Partner, D Pole, J Skinner and L Sandell, End User Technicians, R Devine Senior Committee Services Officer, J Barron, Committee Services Officer, D Cunningham, Committee Services & Licensing Officer and E Graham and K Marriott, both Committee and Licensing Assistants (all Finance & Resources).

Webcasting of Meeting

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Convener intimated that this meeting of the Board would be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast on the Council's internet site.

Declarations of Interest and Transparency Statements

Councillor Mags MacLaren declared a connection in respect of Item 5 - Draft Renfrewshire Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024/29 – by reason of holding a Council appointment on the Williamsburgh Housing Association board. However, she indicated that she had applied the objective test and did not consider she had an interest to declare and intimated that it was her intention to remain in the meeting and to take part in any discussion or voting thereon.

1 Police and Fire & Rescue Services Scrutiny Sub-committee

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Sub-committee held on 16 May 2023, a copy of which forms the Appendix to this document.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

2 General Services Revenue, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Budget Monitoring

There was submitted a General Services Revenue, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Budget Monitoring report by the Director of Finance & Resources for the period 1 April to 23 June 2023. The report stated that the projected outturn as at 31 March 2024 for all services reporting to this Policy Board was an underspend position of £0.343 million while the projected capital outturn for projects was a breakeven position against the revised budget for the year. Summaries were provided over the relevant services in tables within the report, together with further analysis contained with appendices. In addition, the report indicated that revenue expenditure budget adjustments totalling £0.591 million and capital budget adjustments of £0.517 million, had been processed since approval of the budget in March 2023. Details of the adjustments were outlined within the report.

The report also sought approval of an option which would enable the Housing Revenue Account reserves budget to be reinstated by a £0.300m recurrent saving, as a result of the re-design of the delivery of elements of housing management services through management actions in accordance with actions arising from the decision taken at the meeting of Council held on 2 March 2023. It was noted that these proposals would result in no reduction on existing service levels delivered to tenants.

DECIDED:

(a) That the projected Revenue outturn position, detailed in table 1 of the report, be noted;

(b) That the projected Capital outturn position, detailed in table 2 of the report, be noted;

(c) That the reinstatement of HRA reserves by £0.300 million, from the recurring saving option detailed in section 4.2 of the report, be approved; and

(d) That the budget adjustments, detailed in sections 4 and 6 of the report, be noted.

Sederunt

Councillor Nicolson joined the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

3 Building Communities, Greenspaces, Parks & Play Areas, and Villages Investment Fund Update

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to the Greenspaces, Parks & Play Areas and Villages Investment Fund.

The report indicated that the key objective in allocating funding was to work with and support community groups to identify and deliver improvement projects in their local communities, improve their local greenspaces, including parks and play areas, and strengthen the identity, heritage, uniqueness and character of village life. The report indicated that the Funds were promoted to members of the relevant Local Partnerships and through links with communities to encourage eligible communities to bid for a share of the remaining funds. A review of Villages Investment Fund had identified that over £240,000 was available for village projects meeting the set criteria, £40,000 of Green Spaces Funding was accessible to wider Renfrewshire groups for small, appropriate green spaces and park projects, £28,000 of Green Spaces funding was available for fitting school projects and over £28,000 could be bid for by Team Up to Clean Up volunteers.

An appendix to the report detailed 11 Greenspaces Funding applications submitted for approval in terms of delegated authority. The report provided an update on the status of previously approved projects and outlined the progress of Team Up to Clean Up and the Environmental Taskforce, specifically the impacts these initiatives were having in terms of supporting active and engaged individuals and groups and provided updates on key performance indicators. It was proposed that additional efforts be made to encourage participation in the 'take the lead' initiative in the villages and rural areas. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

(a) That the work currently being undertaken to support communities as they developed and delivered projects to be funded using the Greenspaces, Parks & Play Areas and Villages Investment Fund be noted;

(b) That the impact of the funding and the benefits to the wider communities delivered by the projects, as set out in section 3 of the report, be noted; and

(c) That the update on the wider Building Communities programme, including Team Up to Clean Up and the Environmental Taskforce be noted and that additional efforts be made to encourage participation in the 'take the lead' initiative in the villages and rural areas.

4 **Scottish Social Housing Charter - Annual Return 2022/23**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to the Scottish Social Housing Charter Annual Return 2022/23.

The report intimated that Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords were required to submit an Annual Return relating to their performance to the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) by the end of May each year. A copy of the Annual Return 2022/23 made on behalf of the Council, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, detailed Renfrewshire's performance and highlighted key future priorities for the Housing Service in terms of the continuation of driving improved performance and set out actions to support this. The report indicated that the general picture was positive, with improving or stable performance across the majority of the indicators. It was highlighted that where performance had dipped, this reflected the challenges faced during the Covid recovery period, some of which remained, particularly in relation to areas where ongoing issues within the construction industry affected service delivery and performance. The report also indicated that the SHR published all social landlords' performance on its website and, in common with other social landlords, the Council was required to report its performance against the Charter to all tenants. In accordance with guidance issued by the SHR, tenants would be consulted on the preferred format for the tenants' report.

The report also provided performance information in terms of three service performance indicators included within the Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Services - Service Improvement Plan 2023/26, approved at the meeting of this Policy Board held on 16 May 2023, and indicated that a consultation exercise had been undertaken by the SHR in respect of the Single Regulatory Framework. A copy of the consultation document and the draft response prepared on behalf of the Council and submitted by the deadline date of 11 August 2023 was attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

It was proposed that supplementary contextual information would be circulated to members relative to the number of Council-owned properties non-compliant with Scottish Housing Quality Standards, those non-compliant as a result of recently introduced standards and those which were non-compliant as a result of long-standing factors.

DECIDED:

(a) That the submission, made by the Head of Housing Services on the Scottish Social Housing Charter performance information 2022/23, as summarised in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved;

(b) That the specific indicators reported to Board as part of the Service Improvement Planning process be noted;

(c) That arrangements be made to circulate supplementary contextual information to members relative to the number of Council-owned properties non-compliant with Scottish Housing Quality Standards, those which were non-compliant as a result of recently introduced standards and those which were non-compliant as a result of long-standing factors; and

(d) That it be noted that the report advised of the Service's response to the Scottish Housing Regulator's consultation on the Single Regulatory Framework.

5 Draft Renfrewshire Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024/29

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to the draft Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2024/29, a copy of which was appended to the report.

The report indicated that the SHIP, which detailed how funding for affordable housing would be targeted to achieve the objectives contained within Renfrewshire's Local Housing Strategy and support the delivery of a range of affordable housing projects across the Renfrewshire area, was reviewed and updated annually. In accordance with Scottish Government guidance the draft SHIP for the five-year period 2024/29, incorporated a flexible approach to project management by including a degree of overprogramming, so that affordable housing projects could be brought forward within the programme, taking advantage of any additional resources that might become available over the financial year. The report indicated that the Plan contained funding provision for new-build Council housing in the Housing Regeneration and Renewal areas where new-build housing was proposed. Details of the Future Resource Planning Assumptions for the period 2023/26 were also provided. The report proposed that following consultation, the finalised Plan would be submitted to a future meeting of this Policy Board for consideration and, if appropriate approval, prior to submission to the Scottish Government.

It was proposed that arrangements be made to provide members with additional information relative to the housing mix within each project area. This was agreed.

DECIDED:

(a) That the draft Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2024/29, a copy of which was appended to the report, be approved for consultation;

(b) That appropriate arrangements be made, in due course, to submit the finalised Plan to a future meeting of this Policy Board for consideration; and

(c) That arrangements be made to provide members with additional information relative to the housing mix within each project area.

6 Housing – Tackling Dampness, Mould and Condensation

Under reference to Item 8 of the Minute of this Policy Board held on 17 January 2023 there was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to actions implemented and proposed future actions to ensure the effective management of dampness, mould and condensation cases within Renfrewshire Council housing stock.

The report outlined the local processes in place to deal with reports of dampness and mould, detailed changes and improvements made in the previous six-month period, indicated that the processes and procedures would be subject to ongoing review and

outlined further remedial actions already identified.

It was proposed that regular reports be submitted to this Policy Board detailing the number of inspections undertaken and the number of cases raised. This was agreed. In addition, the Head of Housing Services would consider whether a grading of the severity of current cases could be implemented to provide more detail to members of the Policy Board.

DECIDED:

(a) That the actions taken to date and the proposed future actions to ensure the effective management of dampness, mould and condensation cases within the Renfrewshire Council housing stock be noted; and

(b) That regular reports be submitted to this Policy Board detailing the number of inspections undertaken and the number of cases raised and the Head of Housing Services to consider whether a grading of the severity of current cases could be implemented to provide more detail to members of the Policy Board.

7 Tenant Support Fund Policy

Under reference to item 5 of the Minute of the meeting of the Council held on 2 March 2023 there was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to the Tenants' Support Fund Policy.

The report advised that at the above meeting a rent increase of 5.5% had been approved and it had been acknowledged that additional income was needed to continue planned expenditure, including significant investment and regeneration initiatives, together with funding the annual costs of maintaining the housing stock and annual operating costs. It was highlighted that Renfrewshire had around 75% of tenants in receipt of support for their housing costs but that following the rent increase, tenants on partial benefit might need to make a minimal additional contribution and some tenants who might not have previously qualified for help with rent, might now be eligible for financial support. For those tenants who did not qualify for support with their housing costs, the rent increase was due in full. Consequently, it had also been agreed, as part of the approved Housing Revenue Account budget, that a fund be established to provide additional support to tenants in financial hardship and to fund additional service provision in the form of Specialist Income Advice to allow for exclusive support to tenants experiencing financial hardship. The Tenants' Support Fund, was intended to supplement the current rent collection process and be a temporary measure to alleviate existing and emerging financial stress, prevent and reduce escalating rent arrears and contribute to sustaining Council tenancies in Renfrewshire.

The draft Tenants' Support Fund policy, a copy of which was appended to the report, which included proposed application conditions and qualifying criteria was submitted for consideration. Concerns were expressed regarding the lack of detail within the Policy and it was proposed that the Policy be approved and further developed with six-monthly update reports, incorporating details of uptake, submitted to this Policy Board. This was agreed.

The report indicated that the impact of the Tenants' Support Fund, in relation to outcomes for tenants and the impact on the Housing Revenue Account financial

position would be monitored by officers and reported as part of the regular Service Improvement Plan outturn reports to future meetings of this Policy Board.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the Tenants' Support Fund policy, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report be approved;
- (b) That it be agreed that the Tenants' Support Fund was processed as a weekly payment into the qualifying tenant's rent account in line with the charging frequency;
- (c) That it be agreed that the fund would be applicable from 3 April 2023, the effective date of the rent increase, and that awards be backdated to that date if qualifying criteria was met;
- (d) That the arrangements in place for assessing and managing requests for funding from the Tenants' Support Fund, as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved; and
- (e) That the Policy be further developed with six-monthly update reports on the Tenants' Support Fund, incorporating details of uptake and support for tenants to make rent payments be included within future Service Improvement Plan outturn reports submitted to this Policy Board.

Sederunt

Councillor McCulloch left the meeting during consideration of the following item of business.

**8 Housing-led Regeneration and Renewal Programme for
Renfrewshire – Year 2 Update**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to the Housing-led Regeneration and Renewal Programme for Renfrewshire. The report outlined the aims of the Programme, approved at the meeting of the former Communities, Housing & Planning Policy Board held on 18 January 2022. It was also noted that amended proposals for three of the eight regeneration areas had subsequently been approved at the meeting of that Policy Board held on 15 March 2022. An update on progress made as part of phase two of the Programme was provided together with a timeline for delivery of works scheduled throughout the 10-year strategy period. Following approval of the proposals, tenants, residents and owners had been issued with regular updates advising them of the plans that had been approved for each area. In addition, the Council's website had dedicated Housing Regeneration pages which were regularly updated to ensure that residents were kept informed of progress. The report intimated that given the scope and complexity of the Regeneration Proposals, it was to be expected that the project timelines might need to be re-profiled to reflect progress. An exercise had been undertaken to review the project timelines for each Regeneration Area, approved at the meeting of this Policy Board held on 16 August 2022, and updates provided on progress to date, with information on the anticipated timeline for the investment, demolition, newbuild and rehousing initiatives where this was relevant for each

individual area. It was highlighted that for each of the eight Regeneration Areas, an extract of the Milestones document had been included within Appendix 1 of the report detailing the latest proposed timelines and the previously approved timelines. It was noted that in all cases Stakeholder Engagement and Benefits Realisation activities had been extended to continue throughout the programme. There was no change or no significant change in five areas (Auchentorlie, Waverley Road, Ferguslie/Broomlands, the Howwood Road Area and Thrushcraigs), a minor change in the Howard Street Area, where the completion of demolition was a year later than previously proposed and a larger change in the Moorpark and Springbank/Mossvale areas, where the completion of investment work was up to two years later than previously proposed.

The report also highlighted that where newbuild housing was proposed, a key objective of the regeneration programme would be the delivery of homes of a suitable type and size to meet current and future needs and to enable existing households to remain in the area where possible. In addition, it was stated that all Council tenants affected by demolition would be offered suitable alternative accommodation in line with the Council's housing allocation policy and would be entitled to apply for home loss and disturbance payments subject to meeting qualification criteria where the move was in accordance with the phasing strategy that facilitated the regeneration initiative.

DECIDED: That the updated timescale for delivery of works across all eight areas in the ten-year Regeneration and Renewal Programme, as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved and that it be noted that the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure would provide regular updates on progress to future meeting of this Policy Board.

9 **Housing Energy Efficiency and Carbon Reduction Programmes: 2023/24 Award of Funding**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to the Scottish Government's Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Schemes (EES: ABS) Programme 2023/24 and the allocation of up to £1,657,500 for qualifying projects within the Renfrewshire Council area.

The report advised that the Scottish Government's EES: ABS programme, formerly known as the Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland: Area Based Schemes (HEEPS: ABS) had been introduced in 2013/14. The programme was targeted at private sector homeowners to assist their participation and ensure projects to improve energy efficiency could proceed. The key objectives of the programme were detailed within the report, together with the potential benefits and it was highlighted that local authorities acted as co-ordinating agents for all EES: ABS programmes within their area. It was noted that Renfrewshire Council had applied for up to £2,061,138 and confirmation had been received that the application had been successful. This had been accepted by the Head of Housing Services and homologation of this action was now sought. It was noted that, as in previous years, the proposed projects, which were detailed within the report, had focused on mixed tenure blocks of solid wall construction type to support social landlords in meeting the requirements of the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing as well as an allocation to support private homeowners within houses in wholly private blocks which would be delivered via a managing agent. It was highlighted that the costs of the managing agent role would be met by the EES: ABS funding. The report stated that the delivery of the

2022/23 EES: ABS programme had been significantly impacted by a range of issues which affected the construction industry. Notwithstanding the complexity of these challenges, the Council had successfully drawn down £1,259,033 of the available £1,675,500 EES:ABS funding available in 2022/23 to support the delivery of energy efficiency works to eligible private owners. It was highlighted that although there had been a notable recovery in 2022/23, compared to the previous two years, with a significant amount of work being completed, there had been a need to re-profile the timetable for the EES: ABS investment programme with works being rescheduled into 2023/24. It was also noted that there continued to be complexity and a degree of uncertainty around the programming schedule due to the ongoing issues being faced by the construction industry and that this could potentially impact on the scheduling of works and the timetable for drawing down EES: ABS funding, which would be managed by the Head of Housing Services in line with the Scottish Government's funding criteria timescales.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the action taken by the Head of Housing Services in accepting grant funding of £2,061,138 awarded as part of the Scottish Government's EES: ABS programme for qualifying projects, in 2023/24, within the Renfrewshire Council area, be homologated;
- (b) That the Head of Housing Services be authorised to oversee delivery and operational management of the programme; and
- (c) That it be noted that an update on the outcomes delivered from the programme would be submitted to a future meeting of this Policy Board.

10 Business Regulation Service Plan 2023/24

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to the Business Regulation Service Plan 2023/24, a copy of which was appended to the report.

The Business Regulation Service Plan 2023/24 provided detail, as required by Food Standards Scotland, in respect of work being undertaken in connection with the regulation of food law across Renfrewshire, set out objectives, outlined the work undertaken by the service, resource requirements and quality assurance arrangements.

DECIDED: That the Business Regulation Service Plan for 2023/24, a copy of which was appended to the report, be approved.

11 Housing (Scotland) Act 1987- Representation in Respect of a House Failing to Meet the Tolerable Standard

Under reference to Item 11 of the minute of the meeting of the former Housing & Community Safety Policy Board held on 26 August 2014 there was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to the failure of the property at 26E Cedar Avenue, Johnstone to meet the Tolerable Standard, as defined within the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, seeking approval to issue a Demolition Order in terms of Section 115 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 for the

blocks at 24 and 26 Cedar Avenue, Johnstone, including 26E Cedar Avenue, Johnstone, and seeking authority to promote a Compulsory Purchase Order, to complement the Demolition Order process, and bring the remaining privately owned property into Council ownership.

The report advised that following approval by the former Housing and Community Safety Policy Board for properties to be demolished as part of the Johnstone Castle Housing Regeneration programme, one property in the blocks at 24 and 26 Cedar Avenue remained in private ownership with no voluntary agreement in place with the late owner's estate to purchase. Authorisation was now sought to promote a Compulsory Purchase Order to bring the remaining privately owned property into Council ownership.

In addition, it had been determined that the property, 26E Cedar Avenue failed to meet the Tolerable Standard, as defined within the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, on the grounds that it was not substantially free from penetrating damp; did not have satisfactory provision for artificial lighting and heating, due to there being no electricity supply; did not have an adequate supply of wholesome water available within the house; did not have a sink provided with a satisfactory supply of both hot and cold water; did not have a satisfactory supply of hot and cold water at any fixed bath, shower and wash hand basin; did not have satisfactory facilities for the cooking of food, due to there being no electricity supply; and did not have satisfactory equipment installed for detecting, and for giving warning of, fire or suspected fire. Approval was sought to issue a Demolition Order in terms of Section 115 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 for the blocks at 24 and 26 Cedar Avenue, Johnstone, including 26E Cedar Avenue, Johnstone,

DECIDED:

(a) That the issue of a Demolition Order in respect of the properties at 24A – 24F and 26A – 26F Cedar Avenue, Johnstone be approved;

(b) That the Council undertake the demolition of the blocks at 24A – 24F and 26A – 26F Cedar Avenue, Johnstone in the event that, subject to their right to appeal, the owners failed to demolish the block within the prescribed period; and

(c) That the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure be authorised to promote a Compulsory Purchase Order to acquire the property at 26E Cedar Avenue, Johnstone.

12 Renfrewshire Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy 2022-2025 Progress Report

Under reference to item 5 of the Minute of the meeting of the former Communities, Housing & Planning Policy Board held on 15 March 2022 and item 6 of the Minute of the meeting of Council held on 28 April 2022, there was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to the Renfrewshire Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Strategy 2022/25, the associated Action Plan and Community Warden Powers and Anti-Social Behaviour.

The report stated that dealing with anti-social behaviour was a collective approach, delivered through a multi-agency regime involving the Council, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue and other partners. The Renfrewshire ASB Strategy

2022/25 had been developed with a range of statutory, voluntary and community partners whilst taking account of the legislative requirements set out within the Antisocial Behaviour etc (Scotland) Act 2004. The outcomes/priorities detailed within the Strategy had been developed drawing on evidence reported through various channels, including the Renfrewshire Public Services Panel as well as consultation workshops undertaken with elected members. The associated Action Plan reflected improvements that were identified during the review and would be used as the basis for continuous improvement across the partnership. A statistical comparison, over the preceding year, provided within the report, had identified a reduction in the number of serious or persistent cases escalated to Anti-Social Behaviour Investigations with an increase in mediation referrals. This represented the pattern which the partnership had hoped to see where mediation was utilised at the early stages of dispute. In addition, in terms of the wider ASB categories a reduction was evident across most areas, other than abandoned vehicles and reported disturbances to the warden service. A copy of the action plan for the ASB Strategy was appended to the report and provided an update on each of the actions detailed within the plan. It was highlighted that there has been positive progress in terms of 13 of the 16 actions.

DECIDED:

- (a) That the progress on the implementation of the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy and delivery, to date, of the associated Action Plan be noted;
- (b) That it be noted that each area of the action plan would be progressed through the existing Community Safety Partnership forum, which involved key partners, including Police Scotland and local housing providers; and
- (c) That the update in respect of the Council Motion, agreed at the meeting of Council held on 28 April 2022, in relation to the Anti-Social Behaviour be noted.