

Minute of Meeting

Communities and Housing Policy Board

| Date | Time | Venue |
|----------------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tuesday, 21 May 2024 | 13:00 | Council Chambers (Renfrewshire), Council Headquarters, Renfrewshire House, Cotton Street, Paisley, PA1 1AN |

Present: Councillor Jacqueline Cameron, Councillor Gillian Graham, Councillor John Hood, Councillor Robert Innes, Councillor Alec Leishman, Councillor Kenny MacLaren, Councillor Mags MacLaren, Councillor Colin McCulloch, Councillor Cathy McEwan, Councillor Jamie McGuire, Councillor Marie McGurk, Councillor Iain McMillan, Councillor John McNaughtan, Councillor Iain Nicolson, Councillor Emma Rodden

Chair

Councillor McGurk, Convener, presided.

In Attendance

G McNeil, Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure; L McIntyre, Head of Policy & Partnerships, A Armstrong Walter, Strategic Partnership & Inequalities Manager, A Williamson, Strategy & Place Manager, K Dalrymple, Development Plans & Housing Strategy Team Leader (all Chief Executive's); D Wilson, Criminal Justice Services Manager (Children's Services); C Dalrymple, Head of Facilities & Property Services, L Feeley, Head of Housing Services, G Hannah, Head of Climate, Public Protection & Roads, G Heaney, Climate & Public Protection Manager, C Hunter, Environmental Health Public Health Manager, T Irvine, Homeless & Housing Support Services Manager, M MacRury, Housing Newbuild Programme Manager, R Marshall, Environmental Health Business Regulation Manager, I McKinnon, Housing Investment Programme Manager, G Darbyshire, Senior Service Development Manager, J Murdoch, Housing Regeneration Manager, C Robertson, Warden Services Manager, K Sillars, Housing Asset & Investment Manager and R Walkinshaw, Housing Regeneration & Development Manager (all Environment, Housing & Infrastructure); and J Kilpatrick, Finance Business Partner, R Devine Senior Committee Services Officer and D Cunningham, Committee Services & Licensing Officer (all Finance & Resources).

Webcasting of Meeting

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

Apologies

Councillors G Graham and McDonald.

Transparency Statements

Councillor McMillan indicated that he had a connection to item 2 by reason of his membership of the committee of Thorn Athletic whose premises were the location for one of the consultation events being held in connection with the Howwood Road Area Phase 1 project. However, he indicated that he had applied the objective test and did not consider he had an interest to declare.

Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest intimated prior to the commencement of the meeting.

1 Police and Fire and Rescue Services Scrutiny Sub-committee

There was submitted the Minute of the meeting of the Sub-committee held on 12 March 2024, a copy of which forms the Appendix to this Minute.

DECIDED: That the Minute be approved.

2 Service Update Report

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to key service activities and providing an operational performance update in connection with services and key projects and changes to service areas covered within the remit of this Policy Board since the previous meeting of the Policy Board.

Updates were provided in respect of housing services, public protection, community development and justice social work activities detailing specific projects and recent changes within each service area.

The report highlighted amongst other things the decision taken by the Head of Housing Services, in consultation with the Convener, to accept Scottish Government grant funding to support the delivery of new build housing in both Howwood Road and Gallowhill West, as well as Scottish Government grant funding from the Ukrainian Long Term Resettlement Fund, which required to be homologated by the Board.

DECIDED:

(a) That the decision of the Head of Housing Services, in consultation with the Convener of this Policy Board, to accept Scottish Government grant funding of £10,022,083 and £9,630,795 for the housing regeneration projects at Howwood Road

and Gallowhill West subject to compliance with the relevant grant conditions be homologated;

(b) That it be noted that Scottish Government grant funding had been accepted to support current and historic housing regeneration projects;

(c) That the decision of the Head of Housing Services, in consultation with the Convener of this Policy Board, to accept grant funding of £159,956 from the Scottish Government 'Ukrainian Long Term Resettlement Fund', which covered the repairs and furnishing costs for 20 'Last in the Block' properties which had now been let to Ukrainian Displaced Persons, be homologated; and

(d) That otherwise the report be noted.

3 **Service Improvement Plan 2023/26 - Outturn Report**

Under reference to item 4 of the Minute of the meeting of this Policy Board held on 16 May 2023, there was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to performance to deliver the Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Service Improvement Plan 2023/26 during the 12-month period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

The report provided an update on changes made to the action plan and scorecard to reflect the new Council Plan themes; a progress update on implementing the action plan linked to the 2023/26 Service Improvement Plan; and an assessment of performance in relation to the service scorecard of core performance indicators.

DECIDED:

(a) That the report be noted;

(b) That the progress, to date, on delivering the actions contained within the Environment, Housing & Infrastructure - Service Improvement Plan 2023/26 be noted; and

(c) That the performance of the service, as measured by the scorecard indicators, be noted.

4 **Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Service Improvement Plan 2024/27**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to the Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Service Improvement Plan 2024/27.

The Service Improvement Plan 2024/27, a copy of which was attached as Appendix 1 of the report, was designed to sit beneath the Council Plan, Community Plan, Risk Management Plan, and the Workforce Plan to form a suite of documents which provided the strategic direction for the service. The Plan identified the priorities being addressed, the key tasks to be implemented, the implementation timetable and the measures of success. A mid-year progress update on the Service Improvement Plan would be submitted to a meeting of this Policy Board in the autumn of 2024.

DECIDED:

(a) That the Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Service Improvement Plan 2024/27, a copy of which was appended to the report, be approved; and

(b) That it be noted that mid-year progress with the Service Improvement Plan, with updates to the actions and performance indicators, would be submitted to this Policy Board in autumn 2024.

5 Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Annual Health and Safety Report (2023/24) and Plan (2024/25)

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to the Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Annual Health & Safety report 2023/24 and the Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Annual Health & Safety Plan 2024/25.

The Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Annual Health & Safety report 2023/24 was attached as Appendix 1 of the report, while a copy of the Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Annual Health & Safety Plan 2024/25 was attached as Appendix 2 of the report. The Council's Health & Wellbeing Plan, a key priority within the Council's People Strategy 2021/26, promoted a positive health and safety culture to ensure compliance with relevant Health and Safety legislation and supported the Council Plan in working together to achieve a thriving and connected Renfrewshire, creating opportunities for all. The report summarised the approach within the Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Service to health and safety, with the Annual Health & Safety Report 2023/24 detailing activity during 2023/24 and the Annual Health & Safety Plan 2024/25 outlining arrangements in place for 2024/25 for the management of health and safety and continuous improvement in relation to health and safety.

DECIDED:

(a) That the activity within areas in the remit of this Policy Board contained in the Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Health & Safety report 2023/24, attached as Appendix 1 of the report, be approved;

(b) That the activity within areas in the remit of this Policy Board contained in the Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Annual Health & Safety Plan 2024/25, attached as Appendix 2 of the report, be approved; and

(c) That it be noted that the Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Annual Health & Safety report 2023/24 and the Environment, Housing & Infrastructure Annual Health & Safety Plan 2024/25 would be submitted to future meetings of the Infrastructure, Land & Environment Policy Board and the Finance, Resources & Customer Services Policy Board to seek approval of those elements within the report and Plan which were within the remits of those Boards.

6 Homelessness in Renfrewshire – Update

Under reference to item 6 of the Minute of the meeting of this Policy Board held on 16 January 2024, there was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing

& Infrastructure relative to homelessness in Renfrewshire and providing an overview of progress in terms of implementation of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2019/24 (RRTP).

The report provided updated details on the nature and scale of homelessness in Renfrewshire and the current and emerging pressures, making reference to the impact of the COVID recovery years, pressures arising from the cost-of-living crisis, the impact of the migration and asylum humanitarian programmes, a slowing down in the turnover rate of social rented housing and the impact in Renfrewshire since the suspension, in December 2022, of the 'local connection' criteria for homeless applicants. It was noted that local authorities across Scotland were experiencing significant pressures in meeting demand for social housing and there was clear evidence nationally of rising homeless presentations, record numbers in temporary accommodation and increasing waiting times for those in housing need. Renfrewshire continued to experience increasing homelessness and local housing pressures, although Renfrewshire was not currently at risk of 'systemic failure', as some other local authorities were, there was less resilience across the system and it was anticipated Renfrewshire would continue to struggle to provide both temporary and permanent accommodation for those in housing need, in line with statutory duties. A summary of the actions taken locally to respond to the emerging homeless/housing support pressures was provided.

Reference was also made within the report to the new Housing (Scotland) Bill 2024, published at the end of March 2024, which aimed to, amongst other things, help prevent homelessness. It was proposed that the Housing (Scotland) Bill would introduce an 'ask and act' duty on public bodies, such as health boards, Police Scotland and Registered Social Landlords to ask about a person's housing situation and act to avoid them becoming homeless wherever possible. The Bill sought to reform provision for people threatened with homelessness up to six months ahead of settled accommodation being likely to be lost. It was highlighted that there was a degree of concern that the proposed provisions might lead to an increase in referrals or approaches for help, advice, information and temporary accommodation to local authorities homeless teams. The provisions were currently subject to public consultation and scrutiny by the Scottish Parliament, along with other areas covered by the Bill including proposals for provisions for tenants experiencing domestic abuse and a New Deal for Tenants which included long term rent controls for private tenancies. It was noted that a further report on the Housing Bill proposals and consultation would be submitted to a future meeting of this Policy Board for consideration.

The report stated that Renfrewshire's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) had been effective in supporting the provision of adequate temporary accommodation, increasing the number of lets to homeless in order to meet needs, providing assistance to help new tenants resetttle, and upscaling the provision of wraparound support initiatives. It was highlighted that a funding announcement for RRTP's in 2024/25 had been made by the Scottish Government awarding £190,000 to Renfrewshire which was in line with what had been received in the previous five-year period and facilitate the continuation of the key initiatives detailed within Renfrewshire's RRTP, as well as focussed resettlement assistance for those moving out of temporary accommodation and the deployment of Say Women, the Council's delivery partner in an innovative project to support young women who had been subjected to sexual violence and were at risk of homelessness. A report on progress in terms of implementation of Renfrewshire's RRTP would be submitted to a future meeting of this Policy Board.

DECIDED:

(a) That the continuing local and national pressures that were resulting in an increase in homeless applications and demand for housing support and the impacts these increases were currently having and might have in the future be noted; and

(b) That it be noted that reports on the provisions within the new Housing (Scotland) Bill 2024 and the associated public consultation, and implementation of Renfrewshire's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan would be submitted to the next meeting of this Policy Board.

7 Renfrewshire Council Scheme of Assistance for Private Homeowners

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to Renfrewshire Council's Scheme of Assistance for private homeowners.

The report advised that the Scheme had last been reviewed during 2018, an updated Scheme of Assistance had been developed and was submitted for consideration. The main proposed changes to the Scheme included amendments to reflect a previous decision taken by this Policy Board that the grant level to owners in mixed tenure blocks in Housing Regeneration Areas be increased and an extension of the Missing Shares Pilot to include all tenement property types. It was highlighted that the proposed changes would strengthen the support available through the Scheme of Assistance for private homeowners to meet the objectives of the Council and partners as set out within the Renfrewshire Local Housing Strategy 2023/28 which included improving housing conditions and increasing the energy efficiency of the housing stock.

DECIDED: That the updated Renfrewshire Council Scheme of Assistance for Private Homeowners as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, including the extension of the Missing Shares Pilot scheme to all tenement property types, be approved.

8 Private Sector Housing Investment Programme 2024/25

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to the Private Sector Housing Investment Programme 2024/25.

The report referred to the decision taken at the meeting of the Council held on 29 February 2024 when funding provision for Capital and Revenue Private Sector Housing Grant expenditure for 2024/25 had been approved. Based on the Council budget approval and taking account of the most up to date expenditure projections, the report updated the programme requirements for the period 2024/25 to support owner participation on a range of programmes. A copy of the Private Sector Housing Grant Investment Programme 2024/245 was appended to the report.

DECIDED: That the Private Sector Housing Grant Investment Programme 2024/25, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved.

9 **Scottish Housing Regulator Engagement Plan 2024/25**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to the Scottish Housing Regulator's Engagement Plan 2024/25 (the Plan).

The report advised that the Plan focused on service provision by Councils for people who were homeless and compliance with electrical testing and smoke detection installation. A copy of the Plan was appended to the report. The Plan indicated that during 2023/24 the data for all local authorities, from the Scottish Government's national homelessness statistics and the Annual Returns on the Charter, had been reviewed and compared and further information and assurances obtained from all local authorities about homelessness services. To assess the risks to people threatened with or experiencing homelessness the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) proposed to engage with all local authorities during 2024/25, focusing on the provision of appropriate temporary accommodation.

The Council had also advised the SHR that a number of properties did not fully comply with electrical safety and fire detection requirements, which had come into force in early 2022 and formed part of the Scottish Housing Quality Standard, but that inspections were progressing to provide Electrical Installation Condition Reports and to install integrated smoke and heat alarms in all Council properties. The SHR had requested that the Council advise if there were any emerging issues preventing the Service from fulfilling its statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation when it should and from complying with the Unsuitable Accommodation Order and that the Council send monthly updates to the SHR on progress in terms of achieving compliance with electrical safety and fire detection requirements. Arrangements would be made to provide similar progress updates to future meetings of this Policy Board. Like all other Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) the Council required to notify the SHR of any material changes to the Council's Annual Assurance Statement, of any tenant/resident safety matter which had been reported to or was being investigated by the Health and Safety Executive and of reports from regulatory or statutory authorities or insurance providers relating to safety.

The SHR had advised of the intention to visit Renfrewshire, along with a number of other local authorities and RSLs, to discuss the approach adopted in compiling the Annual Assurance Statement. By way of an update members were informed that the compliance visit to Renfrewshire had been undertaken by the SHR during week commencing 13 May 2024.

DECIDED: That the content of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Engagement Plan 2024/25 for Renfrewshire Council, a copy of which was attached as Appendix 1 of the report, be noted.

10 **Consultation on a New Social Housing Net Zero Standard in Scotland**

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to the consultation exercise undertaken by the Scottish Government in connection with the proposed introduction of the Social Housing Net Zero Standard (SHNZS) to replace the second Energy Efficiency Standard for Social

Housing (ESSH2).

The report advised that the SHNZS was designed to reduce the space heating demand of existing social housing in Scotland by 2033, and to replace fossil fuel heating systems with a clean heating alternative, by a backstop of 2045. Space heating demand reduction was required to assist with successfully implementing clean heating systems, such as heat pumps, modern storage, and heat networks. Clean heating fuel, electricity, was currently more expensive than fossil fuels and there would be potential to exacerbate fuel poverty if some space heating demand reduction was not required. Full details of the proposals in terms of the reduced space heating demand levels were provided within the report. The Scottish Government aimed to finalise the SHNZS later in 2024, and for it to be introduced during 2025. It was noted that the Housing Regulator would then incorporate the space heating demand and targets for clean heating installs, as part of the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) and engage with social landlords on the Charter indicators needed for reporting performance against the standard. It was yet to be determined when this data would form part of the ARC submission.

The consultation response prepared and submitted prior to the deadline, on behalf of Renfrewshire Council, a copy of which was appended to the report, was broadly in favour with the proposals as set out within the consultation document.

DECIDED: That the consultation response in relation to the Social Housing Net Zero Standard, submitted on behalf of Renfrewshire Council, a copy of which was attached as Appendix 1 of the report, be homologated.

11 Allocation of property to staff, elected member or committee members: Housing Rule 2.5

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to Housing Rule 2.5, which required all housing allocations which involved either (i) Council members or their immediate families or (ii) members of staff of the Housing Services Division or their immediate families to be notified to the relevant Policy Board.

DECIDED: That the report be noted.

12 Consultation on proposed regulation for restricting promotions of food and drink high in fat sugar and salt

There was submitted a report by the Director of Environment, Housing & Infrastructure relative to the Scottish Government consultation launched on proposals to restrict the promotion of food and drink high in fat, sugar and salt.

The report stated that the consultation would run for 12 weeks, closing on 21 May 2024, outlined health and cost implications of individuals being overweight and obese as a result of a diet high in fat, sugar and salt and provided details of the proposed regulations aimed at creating a food environment which better supported healthier choices. It was highlighted that currently the food environment heavily incentivised and promoted low-cost foods which over-contributed to energy, fat, saturated fat, salt

and free sugar intakes The proposals included restricting multi-buys, unlimited refills or selling at certain locations in stores.

A copy of the draft response to the consultation proposals, prepared on behalf of Renfrewshire Council, was attached as Appendix A of the report.

DECIDED:

(a) That the consultation proposals, and the proposed response of the Council, as detailed within Appendix A of the report, be approved; and

(b) That it be noted that a further report with an update on implications for the Service would be submitted to a future meeting of this Policy Board when the plan had been finalised.

13 Community Learning and Development Plan - 6 monthly update

Under reference to item 10 of the Minute of the meeting of this Policy Board held on 31 October 2023, there was submitted a six-monthly report by the Chief Executive relative to Community Learning & Development.

The report stated that Renfrewshire's Community Learning & Development Service delivered a broad range of universal and targeted services across the area as well as supporting the growth of community capacity in Renfrewshire. Major initiatives led by the service included Street Stuff, Team up to Clean Up and a range of targeted learning opportunities for adults to access further education, training or employment. This work linked to Council priorities including improving outcomes for children and young people, tackling poverty, becoming a net zero authority and strengthening communities. The report highlighted that one of the ways the service evidenced its important role in the community was through the delivery of Renfrewshire's Community Learning & Development Strategy 2021/24, approved at the meeting of the former Communities, Housing & Planning Policy Board held on 17 August 2021. Annual updates on Years 1 and 2 of the strategy had previously been submitted to meetings of this Policy Board with six-monthly updates provided.

The report covered the period October 2023 to March 2024, the first half of Year 3 of the strategy, and detailed the key achievements relating to delivery of that plan over the period. In addition, the report provided an update on the recent inspection by Education Scotland and outlined planned activity over the next six-month period.

DECIDED:

(a) That the achievements of the Service over the last six months be noted; and

(b) That the work underway to respond to the findings of the recent inspection be noted.

14 Community Funding Applications

There was submitted a report by the Chief Executive relative to community funding applications.

The report advised that in order to strengthen the oversight of funding applications, a consolidated community funding report was submitted each meeting cycle providing updated information and setting out recommendations for approval in relation to the Greenspaces, Villages Investment and Sustainable Communities Funds. Whilst the Greenspaces and Villages Investment Fund were well established, the Sustainable Communities Fund had been launched in early October 2023. An officer panel had been established to review applications and make recommendations on funding awards to this Policy Board. The panel had met to consider applications received through the third funding round which had closed on 31 March 2024. A summary of the core focus of the Sustainable Communities Fund was provided.

The report provided, within an appendix, specific information relating to recent applications to the Sustainable Communities Fund together with recommendations for funding. It was highlighted that the next funding round would end on 31 May 2024.

DECIDED: That the funding recommendations in relation to the proposed allocation of Sustainable Communities Funding totalling £284,339, detailed in section 4 and Appendix 1 of the report, be approved.