

HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22 June 2021

5.30 - 6.50 pm

Present: Councillors Bird (Chair), Sheil (Vice-Chair), Bennett, Dalzell, Gawthroe Wood, Gilderdale, Lee, Pounds and Robertson

Executive Councillor: Lewis Herbert

Tenant/Leaseholder Representatives: Agate (Tenant Representative), Amiteye (Tenant Representative), Best (Leaseholder Representative), Powell-Hardy (Tenant Representative), Minns (Tenant Representative) and Stevens (Tenant Representative)

Officers:

Suzanne Hemingway, Strategic Director.

Julia Hovells, Assistant Head of Finance.

David Greening, Head of Housing.

Lynn Thomas, Head of Estates and Facilities.

Gary Clift, Committee Manager.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

21/23/HSC Apologies

Cllr Todd-Jones was unable to attend the meeting and Cllr Herbert, Leader of the Council was present to make the Executive decisions.

21/24/HSC Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

21/25/HSC Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 19 January and 16 March 2021 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

21/26/HSC Appointment of Vice-Chair (Tenant/Leaseholder Rep) for 2021/22 and Introduction of Tenant and Leaseholder Representatives

Diane Best proposed Diana Minns for Vice-Chair, seconded by Cllr Bird. There being no other nomination, Diana Minns was appointed Vice-Chair for 2021/22.

21/27/HSC Public Questions

There were no public questions.

21/28/HSC Resident Involvement Strategy 2021-2024

This item was Chaired by Diana Minns (Vice-Chair)

Matter for Decision

The report presented the Resident Involvement Strategy for 2021/24. The strategy incorporates business plan objectives, feedback from the 2020 Tenant and Leaseholder Satisfaction Survey and recommendations from the Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper (2020).

Decision of Executive Councillor for Strategy and External Partnerships

Agreed the Resident Involvement Strategy 2021/24 (Appendix 1).

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The decision had not been requested for pre-scrutiny. Diane Best commented that the tenant and leaseholder reps had been fully involved in the development of the Strategy and commended it to the committee.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

21/29/HSC Procurement of Contractor(s) to Deliver Planned Building Maintenance Work - 2022-2028

This item was Chaired by Diana Minns (Vice-Chair)

Matter for Decision

The report proposed a procurement to award a contract for planned maintenance service delivery November 2022 to March 2028.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Strategy and External Partnerships

Approved the issue of tenders and following evaluation of tenders, delegate authority to the Strategic Director (in consultation with the Executive Councillor, Chair and Vice Chair of Housing Scrutiny Committee and spokespersons) to award a contract(s) to a contractor(s) to carry out planned building maintenance / capital works to Council housing and other buildings for a period of five years and four months from November 2022 to March 2028, with an option to extend for one or more periods up to a maximum extension of three years.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee welcomed the report and that resident representatives would be involved in the selection process.

The Committee resolved by 15 votes to 0 to endorse the recommendation.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

21/30/HSC Procurement of Contractor(s) to Deliver Compliance Work – November 2022 – March 2027

This item was Chaired by Diana Minns (Vice-Chair)

Matter for Decision

The report proposed a procurement to award a contract(s) for compliance-based activities. This includes gas servicing and maintenance, servicing including (but not limited to) electrical testing, fire safety asset servicing, water hygiene. The contracts are for up to four years, four months with an option to extend for one or more periods up to a maximum extension of three years.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Strategy and External Partnerships

Agreed to amalgamate the aforementioned contracts (paragraph 1, Executive Summary of the report) into a single procurement exercise and delegate authority to the Strategic Director (in consultation with Executive Councillor, Chair and Vice Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Committee and spokespersons) to award either a single contractor, or multiple contracts for Compliance Delivery areas.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee welcomed the report.

The Committee resolved by 15 votes to 0 to endorse the recommendation.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

21/31/HSC Housing Services Communal Cleaning

This item was Chaired by Diana Minns (Vice-Chair)

Matter for Decision

The report provided an update on the current and proposed future arrangements for communal cleaning services across the Council's housing stock and bin cleaning services in sheltered housing.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Strategy and External Partnerships

Authorised officers to explore the option of transferring responsibility for the cleaning of the Councils Category 2 Sheltered Housing Schemes back in house to the Council, and to delegate authority to the Strategic Director, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Housing, Chair and Vice Chair of Housing Scrutiny Committee (HSC) and the opposition spokespersons, to make a decision on whether or not this should go ahead.

Following the above decision, to delegate authority to the Strategic Director, in consultation with the Executive Cllr for Housing, Chair and Vice Chair of HSC and the opposition spokespersons, to tender and award a contract for the communal cleaning of the Council's General Housing, Category 1 sheltered housing and, potentially, category 2 sheltered housing stock.

Approved delegated authority to the Head of Finance to amend both expenditure and income budgets in relation to the provision of communal cleaning services and bin cleaning in sheltered housing schemes in the HRA in line with prices received as part of the recent procurement exercises.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee welcomed the report and noted that resident representatives had already become involved in the next steps.

In response to a point made that cleaning bins at sheltered housing had re-started, the officer advised that there was a budget to re-commence the cleaning but that to fulfil the service going forward there will need to be an increase in the overall budget.

The Committee resolved by 15 votes to 0 to endorse the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

21/32/HSC 2020/21 Housing Revenue Account Revenue and Capital Outturn, Carry Forwards and Significant Variances

This item was Chaired by Diana Minns (Vice-Chair)

Matter for Decision

The report provided a summary of the 2020/21 outturn position for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), budget variances, carry forward requests and written-off housing debt in 2020/21.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Strategy and External Partnerships

Approved carry forward requests totalling £7, 598,300 in revenue funding from 2020/21 into 2021/22 as detailed in Appendix C of the report.

Recommends to Council carry forward requests of £18,610,000 in HRA and General Fund capital budgets and associated resources from 2020/21 into 2021/22 and beyond to fund re-phased net capital spending, as detailed in appendix D and the associated notes to the appendix.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

In response to a question on the possible use of sub-contractors to help with the back-log of work, the officer stated that at this stage it wasn't envisaged it would be necessary to use sub-contractors, but if that changed, the proper procurement procedures would be followed to ensure quality (as well as value for money).

The committee and the Executive Councillor paid tribute to the workforce for managing to keep things going as best as possible during the pandemic.

The Committee resolved by 13 votes to 0 to endorse the recommendation (a) and by 7 votes to 0 on recommendation (b).

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

21/33/HSC Social Housing Lettings Policy

This item, along with the rest of the agenda was Chaired by Councillor Bird (Chair)

Matter for Decision

The report presented a revised Lettings Policy, which sets out how housing register applicants are prioritized and how the Council and housing association homes across the region are allocated.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Strategy and External Partnerships

Approve the revised Lettings Policy as set out in appendix 1 of the report.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The decision had not been requested for pre-scrutiny.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

21/34/HSC Purchase of Additional Affordable Housing, The Mews, Histon Road**Matter for Decision**

The report proposed the purchase of an additional 3 properties for rent as Council homes, with a revision to the budget for this development.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Strategy and External Partnerships

Approved the purchase of 3 additional new Council rented homes at the Mews, Histon Road and delegated authority to the Strategic Director to approve contract terms with Laragh Homes/LLP in respect of this transaction.

Approved a revised combined total budget of **£1,978,300** to enable the development of 10 homes at the Mews, Histon Road.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

In response to questions from the committee:

the officers would report back to Cllr Robertson on the heating system at the 3 properties;

the officers would review how to better reflect in development reports any impact on the water supply of the development (notwithstanding this will have been addressed during the planning application process).

The Committee resolved by 9 votes to 0 to endorse the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

21/35/HSC Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy – New Housing Policies**Matter for Decision**

The report proposed three new housing policies developed with South Cambridgeshire DC and which will form annexes to the Greater Cambridge Housing Strategy 2019-2023.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Strategy and External Partnerships

Approved the proposed Build to Rent Policy attached as Appendix A to the report

Approved the proposed Clustering & Distribution of Affordable Housing policy attached as Appendix B to the report

Approved the proposed Affordable Rents policy attached as Appendix C to the report.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

Officers undertook to respond to Cllr Dalzell on his question of the percentage of affordable housing applied on smaller multi-tenure sites (paragraph 57 of appendix A).

The Committee resolved by 9 votes to 0 to endorse the recommendations.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

21/36/HSC Refugee Resettlement Programme

Matter for Decision

The report proposed how to meet a Council pledge to resettle 200 refugees over a five year period.

Decision of Executive Councillor for Strategy and External Partnerships

Agree to allocate a maximum of 4 City Council properties per annum, outside of the current Lettings Policy, for the next five years, to help deliver the pledge to resettle 200 more refugees.

Reason for the Decision

As set out in the Officer's report.

Any Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable.

Scrutiny Considerations

The Committee welcomed this proposal.

The Committee resolved by 9 votes to 0 to endorse the recommendation.

Conflicts of Interest Declared by the Executive Councillor (and any Dispensations Granted)

No conflicts of interest were declared by the Executive Councillor.

The meeting ended at 6.50 pm
CHAIR

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