

MORAY COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Housing and Community Safety Committee

Tuesday, 14 February 2023

Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX

PRESENT

Councillor Theresa Coull, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Amber Dunbar, Councillor Jérémie Fernandes, Councillor Donald Gatt, Councillor Sandy Keith, Councillor Scott Lawrence, Councillor Marc Macrae, Councillor Shona Morrison, Councillor Bridget Mustard, Councillor Kathleen Robertson, Councillor Derek Ross, Councillor John Stuart, Councillor Draeyk Van Der Horn

APOLOGIES

Ms Anna Bamforth, Ms Jane Bartecki, Mr Ronald Tolmie

IN ATTENDANCE

Also in attendance at the above meeting were the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance), Head of Housing and Property Services, Housing Strategy and Development Manager, Property Asset Manager, Housing Needs Manager, Georgina Anderson, Senior Solicitor and Lindsey Robinson, Committee Service Officer as clerk to the meeting.

1. Chair

Councillor Amber Dunbar, as Chair of the Housing and Community Safety Committee, chaired the meeting.

2. Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests *

In terms of Standing Order 21 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct, 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 or any declarations of Member's interests in respect of any item on the agenda.

3. Minute of the meeting of the Housing and Community Safety Committee of 15 November 2022

The minute of the meeting of the Housing and Community Safety Committee dated 15 November 2022 was submitted and approved.

4. Written Questions **

The Committee noted that no written questions had been submitted.

5. Homelessness Policy Update

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of the requirement to amend the Homelessness Policy,

resulting from the Homeless Persons (Scotland) Order 2022, which was laid before Parliament on 20 September 2022 and came into force on 29 November 2022.

Following consideration, the Committee agreed:

- i. to note the requirement to amend the Homelessness Policy, as detailed in Section 3 and Section 6 of the report;
- ii. to note that legislative changes, set out in Section 5 of the report, were enacted on 29 November 2022;
- iii. the amendments to the Homelessness Policy as set out in Section 6 and Appendix I of the report; and
- iv. to note that monitoring will be undertaken to establish the impact of the changes.

6. Affordable Housing Investment Programme

A report by the Depute Chief Executive (Economy, Environment and Finance) informed the Committee of progress on the Affordable Housing Investment Programme in Moray.

Following consideration, where Officers answered questions on the developments in Aberlour and Keith, and the economic climate in regard to new build properties, the Committee agreed to:

- i. note the progress on the Moray Affordable Housing Investment Programme;
- ii. note the progress on the delivery of the Council's new build and acquisition programme; and
- iii. note the progress on the delivery of housing at Bilbohall, Elgin.

7. Question Time ***

Under reference to paragraph 7 of the minute of this Committee dated 15 November 2022, Councillor Keith sought an update on the moss removal for the properties in Elgin, as the sonic devices were purchased through the Elgin Common Good Fund and the Council will be installing gull proof bins, but the work was starting in Forres.

In response, the Head of Housing and Property Services advised that in the forthcoming HRA budget there would be additional provision for moss removal and that approval from procurement had been received for an extended programme of moss removal.

The Property Asset Manager advised that there had been a lot of work in the background to ensure that the processes were in place for the coming year. The details of the properties identified had been circulated to Members previously but it could be circulated again to highlight how the programme would be worked through.

Councillor Coull sought clarification on properties with damp and mould and asked if there were many properties that needed work regarding this. Councillor Coull also

queried whether there was scope to use smart technology to detect damp and mould, as used by Glasgow City Council in a pilot project.

In response, the Head of Housing and Property Services advised that Moray does not have the same issues with damp as some other local authorities do due to the construction materials used. There are periodic reports of damp, mould and condensation and these are always followed up with an inspection and any remedial action required. Due to the increased public interest in this, all practices are being reviewed and the use of sensors and technology is being investigated. The Scottish Housing Regulator has advised that this is an area they will be scrutinising.

The Property Asset Manager added that a report will come back to the Committee to detail the investigations into the use of different technology.

Councillor Mustard sought clarification on whether Covid-19 restrictions were still in place to protect staff going into tenant's properties.

In response, the Head of Housing and Property Services advised that the Covid-19 measures had been incorporated into the good practice guidelines and that staff respond to tenant concerns and will act accordingly.

Councillor Fernandes sought clarification as to whether there would be a response to the Scottish Government consultation on the Land and Buildings Transaction Tax and, if there was, would Members have access to it.

In response, the Housing Strategy and Development Manager advised that she would be the lead on the response to the consultation and that a report would be brought to the Committee.

Councillor Gatt stated that some of the housing policies on the Council's website were out of date, namely the Estate Management Policy and the Decoration Allowance Policy, and sought clarification on any plans to update these.

In response, the Head of Housing and Property Services advised that as part of the review of the Housing Officers' role within the Estate Management team, policies and procedures would be reviewed and updated. The Decoration Allowance Policy would tie in more with the Re-let Standards.

The Property Asset Manager advised that he did not know of any ongoing review of the decoration policy and that he would need to discuss this with the Building Services Manager with a view to having the policy updated.