

## ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **HOUSING COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Tuesday 1 October 2002 at 4.20 pm.

**Present:** Councillors FRANK ELLIS, ALISTAIR GRAY, IAN ANGUS, BILL CROWE, STEWART McGLYNN, GLENNIS MIDDLETON, JOY MOWATT, ROBERT MYLES, PETER NIELD, BILL ROBERTON and SHEENA WELSH.

**Apology:** An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor GEORGE NORRIE MBE.

Councillor ELLIS, Convener, in the Chair.

### 1. MINUTES

#### (a) Previous Meeting

The [minute of meeting of this Committee of 13 August 2002](#) was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

#### (b) Executive Sub-Committee

The minute of meeting of the Executive Sub-Committee of 3 September 2002, a copy of which is appended hereto, was submitted and noted (**APPENDIX 1**).

### 2. HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME - HRA BLOCK - 2002/2003

With reference to Article 2 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 13 August 2002, there was submitted [Report No 1105/02](#) by the Director of Finance setting out the latest position on the HRA Housing Capital Programme and the HRA Planned Maintenance Programme for 2002/2003. The Report also detailed the latest capital estimate for the year together with the capital spend figures to the end of August 2002. Budget and actual figures for certain elements of the HRA Planned Maintenance Programme were also shown.

The Report advised that the spend achieved to 31 August 2002 on the Housing Capital Programme was £1,273 million. This did not include internal fees after 30 June 2002. With regard to the Planned Maintenance Programme, it was noted that the spend was 20% of the budget and that the total spend for the year was currently assumed to be £1.433 million. This would be closely monitored and referred to in future Reports.

The Committee, for its interest, agreed:-

- (i) to note the figures presented for the Housing Capital Programme and certain elements of HRA Planned Maintenance; and
- (ii) to approve the proposed virement from CFCR to Planned Maintenance.

### 3. THE OPERATION OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998 IN ANGUS - AUGUST 2001 TO JULY 2002

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 11 January 2000, there was submitted [Report No 1106/02](#) by the Director of Housing detailing the progress of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and specifically Anti-Social Behaviour Orders in Angus.

The Report concluded that while the year to July had been quiet in terms of receipt of applications, important work had been carried out in terms of awareness raising and the successful Anti-Social Behaviour Order action, which was one of the few in Scotland to have been defended.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the Report.

#### 4. **MAKING HOUSING INFORMATION AND ADVICE MORE ACCESSIBLE**

There was submitted [Report No 1107/02](#) by the Director of Housing advising members on how the Housing Department proposed to make advice and information more available to people for whom English was not their first language, and to those who were blind or visually impaired, or had a literacy problem.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to ask front line Housing staff to use the procedural note attached to the Report when dealing with those whose first language was not English and/or who were blind, visually impaired, or had a literacy problem; and
- (iii) to publish a set of posters which outlined the Department's commitment to equal access to services in languages which reflected the more common ethnic communities in Angus, these posters to be posted in each local Housing/ACCESS Office and all Housing Headquarters buildings.

#### 5. **AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS CARRIED OUT TO ANGUS COUNCIL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT PROPERTIES IN 2001/2002**

There was submitted [Report No 1108/02](#) by the Director of Housing containing details of the number and types of permanent aids and adaptations carried out to Angus Council properties during the financial year 2001/2002.

The Report advised that, during the financial year 2001/2002, 347 adaptations had been carried out to Council houses, an increase of almost 51% from 2000/2001, with details of the type of work outlined in Appendix I to the Report. The aids and adaptations spend for the year was £344,182.53, an overspend of £4,182.53, which had been met from the Housing Revenue Account.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the Report.

#### 6. **ANNUAL COUNCIL HOUSE GARDEN COMPETITION**

With reference to Article 3 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 25 September 2001, there was submitted [Report No 1109/02](#) by the Director of Housing advising the Committee of the results of the annual Council House Garden Competition for 2002 with the awards ceremony having taken place earlier today.

The Convener advised the Committee that the costs involved could be met from within the Housing Revenue Budget and thanked the Scottish Hydro-Electric who had kindly donated two energy saving light bulbs to each entrant. Thanks were also given to Blackwall Limited who had supplied composter bins to each winner in the various sections.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the Report and to congratulate the prize winners.

#### 7. **RENT ARREARS PERFORMANCE - ANNUAL STATISTICS 2001/2002**

With reference to Article 12 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 22 May 2001, there was submitted [Report No 1110/02](#) by the Director of Housing which provided statistical information in relation to Serious Arrears Cases during 2001/2002.

The Report indicated that, as a percentage of rental income, Angus rent arrears as at 31 December 2001 were 3.47% against the Scottish average of 5.05%, 13<sup>th</sup> lowest amongst all authorities. By the end of the financial year the position had improved significantly, from £438,428.00 at 31 December 2001 to £337,597.00 at 31 March 2002, and it was anticipated that when tables were published the Council's position would be that of the third lowest rent arrears in Scotland.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report and the Appendix; and
- (ii) to congratulate the Housing Department on their collection rate and to commend the Angus Council tenants on their continued good payment record.

#### **8. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - WRITE OFF OF RENT IN 2000/2001**

With reference to Article 12 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 10 August 1999, there was submitted [Report No 1111/02](#) by the Director of Housing on the Housing Revenue Account rent arrears for 2000/01 which it was proposed be written off. The Appendix to the Report gave numeric details of the cases in each area, analysed into categories and amounts.

The Report advised that the term "written off" did not mean that the debt was totally ignored in future and applicants for Council Houses were vetted to ensure that all debts to Angus Council, including certain non-housing debts, were acknowledged.

The Committee agreed to write off the rent amounts associated with the cases as set out in the Appendix to the Report, totalling £59,449.52.

#### **9. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT UNPLANNED REPAIRS - VOLUNTARY TERMINATION OF CONTRACT**

With reference to Article 3 of the minute of meeting of the Executive Sub-Committee of 8 February 2000, there was submitted [Report No 1112/02](#) by the Director of Housing which outlined the voluntary termination, by Stewart Milne Construction Limited, of their participation in 15 contracts which they were undertaking in relation to Housing Revenue Account Unplanned Repairs. Termination was effective from 22 November 2002 and covered the remaining contract period to 31 March 2003.

The Report indicated that the Housing Department had already advertised for renewal of all 30 contracts (covering the period 1 April 2003 to 2006). However, there was an obvious shortfall of contracted cover for the period 22 November 2002 until 31 March 2003.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the terms of the Report; and
- (ii) to approve the action taken by the relevant officers to secure a seamless service which would be reported on in due course.

#### **10. HEATING REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME - PROGRESS REPORT**

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 25 September 2001, there was submitted [Report No 1113/02](#) by the Director of Housing advising members of the progress towards implementation of the bulk procurement of central heating replacement systems across the Council's Housing Stock.

The Report advised that there would be three contracts, each of three years duration, and subject to full tenant co-operation and effective Contractor performance, it was expected that modern energy-efficient, full house heating would be installed in all Council houses by the end of March 2006. The Scottish Executive had set a Social Justice target that, by March 2006, all social housing should have modern energy efficient heating. This, it was hoped, would be achieved in Angus with no additional resources being requested.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the Report and that a full detailed Report of the properties involved would be submitted to the next Housing Committee on 12 November 2002.

## 11. PROPOSED FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR ADMINISTRATION OF GAS SERVICING AND MAINTENANCE IN COUNCIL HOUSE PROPERTIES

With reference to Article 17 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 8 January 2002, there was submitted [Joint Report No 1118/02](#) by the Director of Housing and Director of Property Services which proposed changes to the management arrangements for the administration of gas servicing and maintenance works to the Council's Housing stock.

The Report concluded that the changes to the management and administration of the gas servicing and maintenance arrangements outlined in the Report, by relocating the gas team to the Housing Department in Forfar, would improve the effectiveness of the gas team and ensure a more robust compliance with the gas regulations in force.

The Committee, for its interest, agreed:-

- (i) to note and approve the contents of the Report;
- (ii) to note the additional staffing and other costs incurred; and
- (iii) to delegate authority to the Director of Housing, in consultation with the Convener and Vice-Convener, to oversee the changes to the management and administration of the gas services and maintenance arrangements, as outlined in the Report.

## 12. RENT STRUCTURE - PROPOSALS FOR RATIONALISATION

With reference to Article 3 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 12 February 2002, there was submitted [Report No 1114/02](#) by the Director of Housing outlining proposals to rationalise the Housing Revenue Account rent structure to reflect progress made to date, active measures and improvements in place and to meet future demands.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents and approve the recommendations of the Report in regard to the proposed rationalisation of the rent structure with effect from 1 April 2003;
- (ii) to note that there was a requirement within the Housing (Scotland) Act for tenants to be consulted with regard to rent levels and that a Report on this would be submitted to the Housing Committee on 12 November 2002;
- (iii) that a further Report be submitted regarding the changes to be made against entitled tenants and the account raising methods involved; and
- (iv) to note that a Report, outlining the Housing Revenue Account rental requirement for 2003/04, would follow the due budget consideration process.

## 13. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Committee resolved, in terms of Standing Order 27(2), that the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items, so as to avoid the disclosure of information which was exempt in terms of Part I of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, paragraphs 4, 6, 8 and 9.

## 14. REPAIR GRANT APPLICATIONS APPROVED UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

With reference to Article 16 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 13 August 2002, there was submitted and noted [Report No 1092/02](#) by the Director of Planning and Transport detailing applications for repair grants totalling £20,021.36, which had been approved under delegated authority.

**15. IMPROVEMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS APPROVED UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY**

With reference to Article 17 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 13 August 2002, there was submitted and noted [Report No 1093/02](#) by the Director of Planning and Transport detailing applications for improvement grants totalling £52,086.96, which had been approved under delegated authority.

**16. DISPOSALS****(a) 30 Panmure Terrace, Muirdrum**

There was submitted [Report No 1115/02](#) by the Director of Housing relating to the disposal of an area of ground at Panmure Terrace, Muirdrum, as detailed in the plan attached to the Report.

The Committee agreed that the area of ground referred to in the Report be sold to the applicants at the agreed valuation, subject to consent being received from the Scottish Ministers, and on appropriate terms and conditions, including that the Council's reasonable legal and valuation costs be met by the applicants.

**(b) 39 Newton Avenue, Arbroath**

There was submitted [Report No 1116/02](#) by the Director of Housing relating to the disposal of an area of ground adjacent to 39 Newton Avenue, Arbroath, as detailed in the plan attached to the Report.

The Committee agreed that the area of ground referred to in the Report be sold to the applicants at the agreed valuation, subject to consent being received from the Scottish Ministers, planning permission for change of use being granted, and on appropriate terms and conditions, including that the Council's reasonable legal and valuation costs be met by the applicant.

**17. SERIOUS ARREARS CASES - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT TENANTS**

There was submitted [Report No 1117/02](#) by the Director of Housing regarding serious arrears of rent in respect of 25 Council house tenants, as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.

The Committee agreed that all 25 cases be monitored and that approval be given to evict if regular payments to reduce the arrears were not received.

**18. PROPOSED NEW OFFICE FOR HOUSING DEPARTMENT STAFF IN FORFAR**

With reference to Article 27 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 13 August 2002, there was submitted Joint [Report No 1119/02](#) by the Director of Property Services and the Director of Housing advising the Committee of the current accommodation utilised by the Housing Department in Forfar and proposing an investigation to relocate staff to new office accommodation in Forfar.

The Committee, for its interest, agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report; and
- (ii) to remit to the Director of Property Services to investigate options for the provision of new office accommodation for the Housing Department in Forfar through the marketing of a development opportunity and report back to the Committee in due course with details of these options.

**19. KITCHEN REPLACEMENTS AT KNOWEHEAD CRESCENT, KIRRIEMUIR - CONTRACT 01\_KITC\_K1- EXTENSION OF CONTRACT TO INCLUDE ADDITIONAL PROPERTIES AT CHRISTIES LANE, MONTROSE**

With reference to Article 18 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 8 January 20002, there was submitted [Report No 1120/02](#) by the Director of Property Services regarding the addition of 46 properties to the kitchen replacement contract currently being executed.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve the addition of 46 properties in Montrose to the contract currently being executed by Taycon Construction Ltd., Dundee at an estimated additional cost of £158,579;
- (ii) to approve the estimated revised total cost of £488,139 (at out-turn prices);
- (iii) to approve the estimated revised contract sum of £461,339 which represented an overspend in excess of 5% of the original contract sum, reported to the Director of Finance in accordance with Clause 7.5 of the Financial Regulations; and
- (iv) to note that the revised expenditure arising from this project would be accommodated within the HRA Planning Maintenance Programme.

**20. TENDER LIST - KITCHEN REFURBISHMENTS AT ARBROATH AND CARNOUSTIE - CONTRACT 02\_KITC\_AC1**

There was submitted [Report No 1121/02](#) by the Director of Property Services giving details of the contractors to be invited to tender for kitchen refurbishments at Arbroath and Carnoustie.

The Committee agreed that the following five contractors be invited to tender, subject to any financial assessment as required by the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Director of Property Services:-

R S Hill, Douglstown, Forfar  
 Logie Glazing and Building Services, Dundee  
 Shepherd General Builders Ltd, Forfar  
 Taycon Construction Ltd, Dundee  
 Thomson & Douglas Limited, Kingsmuir, Forfar