

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of SPECIAL MEETING of the **COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar, on Tuesday 11 February 2020 at 2.00 pm.

Present: Councillors MARK SALMOND, DEREK WANN, JULIE BELL, KENNY BRAES, DAVID FAIRWEATHER, LYNNE DEVINE, BILL DUFF, BRENDA DURNO, CRAIG FOTHERINGHAM, DAVID LUMGAIR, IAN MCLAREN, RICHARD MOORE, RONNIE PROCTOR MBE and COLIN BROWN BEM.

Councillor SALMOND, Convener, in the Chair.

1. APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Tommy Stewart, Braden Davy and Lois Speed with Councillors Derek Wann, David Fairweather and Colin Brown substituting respectively; and David Cheape.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were intimated.

3. HOUSING CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUDGET PERFORMANCE REPORT 2019/20

With reference to Article 4 of the minute of special meeting of this Committee of 12 February 2019, there was submitted Joint Report No 42/20 by the Director of Communities and the Director of Finance, setting out the actual Capital and Revenue spend to 31 December 2019, together with projected outturns for the year to 31 March 2020, and any required updated capital funding proposals.

The Report advised that the actual spend on the overall Housing Capital Programme 2019/20 achieved to 31 December 2019 was £5,559,000, equating to 30% of the monitoring budget of £18,535,000. It was projected at the current time, that by the end of the financial year 2019/20, net expenditure would total £14,314,000, representing a potential underspend of 23%, the reasons for which were contained in Section 6 of the Report, and included challenging conditions in the construction industry impacting on the ability of some contractors to recruit and retain sufficient resources in certain trades. This in turn affected a number of project areas locally, which officers sought to mitigate through identifying effective procurement options. Section 6 of the Report provided commentary on certain specific projects and programmes on an exception basis.

Having heard contributions from Councillors Moore, Proctor and Bell, and responses from the Service Leader (Housing), the Committee agreed to note the projected year end positions on capital and revenue expenditure as indicated in Appendices 1 and 2 of the Report; and the indicative funding proposals for the programme.

4. REQUEST FOR A DEPUTATION

The Committee agreed to hear Mrs Pat Millar, spokesperson on behalf of Angus Council Tenants Steering Group. Thanking the Committee for the opportunity to address members on behalf of the tenants, she expressed support for the proposals to be considered by the Committee under Article 5 below. She believed that this occasion allowed people to reflect upon the quality of the housing service and tenancy provided by the Council, and also how the rents contributed to bringing about improvements to the housing stock. She particularly welcomed the adaptation of all the Council's housing stock for climate change conditions which, would be well worth all the effort which this involved. She reminded members that the Tenants Steering Group played a major part in shaping the Housing Plan, and was pleased to give its support.

Following her remarks, Mrs Millar withdrew to the public benches.

5. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT RENT SETTING AND BUDGET STRATEGY 2020 / 21 – 2023 / 24

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of special meeting of this Committee of 12 February 2019, there was submitted Joint Report No 43/20 by the Director of Communities and the Director of Finance, setting out estimated income and expenditure for 2020/21, capital investment proposals, affordability assessment, and the recommendation of a continued programme of investment in new and existing stock.

Having heard the views of council tenants through Mrs Millar at Article 4 above, and following an introduction to the Report from Councillor Fotheringham, Housing spokesperson, followed by contributions from Councillors Moore (responded to by the Service Lead – Finance), Proctor, Braes, Bell and Duff, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to approve the revenue budget for 2020/21 as detailed in Appendix 1 to the Report;
- (ii) to approve an average rent increase of 3.1% for Council houses and associated service charges for sheltered, retirement and dispersed accommodation as detailed in Appendix 2 to the Report;
- (iii) to approve a rent increase of 3.1% for St Christopher's Travelling People Site, garages and garage sites as also set out in Appendix 2 to the Report;
- (iv) to set an HRA Capital Plan for the financial year 2020/21 based on the rent strategy adopted as well as the indicative level of programme for the financial years 2021/22 to 2023/24 as detailed in Appendix 3 to the Report;
- (v) to note that, based on the assumptions made, and the affordability assessment undertaken, the 2019/20 – 2023/24 Housing Revenue Account Financial Plan was considered to be affordable, prudent and sustainable as required by the Prudential Code, and as detailed in Section 8 and Appendix 4 to the Report;
- (vi) to approve the prudential indicators as shown in Appendix 5 in compliance with Prudential Code requirements; and
- (vii) to note the plans being put in place to maintain a prudent and affordable investment programme for future years.