

ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of SPECIAL MEETING of the **COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE** held remotely on Tuesday 8 February 2022 at 2.00 pm.

Present: Councillors MARK SALMOND, TOMMY STEWART, KENNY BRAES, DAVID CHEAPE, BRADEN DAVY, LYNNE DEVINE, BILL DUFF, BRENDA DURNO, CRAIG FOTHERINGHAM, DAVID LUMGAIR, MARK MACDONALD, IAN MCLAREN, RICHARD MOORE, DAVID FAIRWEATHER, LOIS SPEED and RON STURROCK.

Councillor SALMOND, Convener, in the Chair.

1. **APOLOGIES/SUBSTITUTES**

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Ronnie Proctor MBE with Councillor David Fairweather substituting.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Stewart declared an interest in Item 4, Report 32/22 as he was a tenant of a council lock up garage. He indicated that he would take part in any discussion and voting on the item.

At this point, Councillors Durno and Davy joined the meeting.

3. **HOUSING CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUDGET PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021/22**

With reference to Article 3 of the minute of special meeting of this Committee of 9 February 2021, there was submitted Joint Report No 31/22 by the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth and the Director of Finance, setting out the actual Capital and Revenue spend to 31 December 2021, together with projected outturns for the year to 31 March 2022, and any required updated capital funding proposals.

The Report advised that the actual spend on the overall Housing Capital Programme 2021/22 achieved to 31 December 2021 was £15.288 million equating to 87% of the monitoring budget of £17.575 million. It was projected at the current time, that by the end of the financial year 2021/22, net expenditure would total £21.004 million, representing a potential overspend of 20%, the main reasons for which were contained in Section 6 of the Report.

It was noted that the pandemic and uncertain global environment continued to have an impact on the HRA Revenue Budget. House moves and works in properties were permitted, notwithstanding the recent restrictions, but additional safe working practices continued to hamper a return to normal conditions. There also continued to be difficulties experienced with supply of materials and staff retention challenges for contractors.

Having considered the contents of the Report, 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. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT RENT SETTING AND BUDGET STRATEGY 2022/23 – 2025/26**

With reference to Article 4 of the minute of special meeting of this Committee of 9 February 2021, there was submitted Joint Report No 32/22 by the Director of Vibrant Communities and Sustainable Growth and the Director of Finance, setting out estimated income and expenditure for 2022/23, capital investment proposals, affordability assessment, and the recommendation of a continued programme of investment in new and existing stock.

Councillor Salmond advised that given the bleak financial outlook for families all over Angus from the prospect of massive rises in gas and electric, rising inflation – affecting food and petrol costs, together with other household pressures, moved that the Committee agree that this year's Council House Rent rise should only be 1% and not the 2% as recommended in the Report. He felt that this would send a strong signal that the Council was listening and understood the pressures on Angus families household budgets in the social housing sector.

At this stage, Councillor Salmond moved that the Committee agrees the following: -

- (i) to approve the revenue budget for 2022/23 as detailed in the amended Appendix 1 to the Report;
- (ii) to approve an average rent increase of 1% for Council houses and associated service charges for sheltered, retirement and dispersed accommodation as detailed in the amended Appendix 2 to the Report;
- (iii) to approve a rent increase of 1% for St Christopher's Travelling People Site, garages and garage sites as also set out in the amended Appendix 2 to the Report;
- (iv) to approve the HRA Capital Plan for the financial years 2022/23 to 2020/26 with the projects therein unchanged from those presented with the issued report, noting that the mix of funding would though change as detailed in the attached amended Appendix 3 summary page.
- (v) to note that, based on the assumptions made, and the affordability assessment undertaken, the 2022/23 – 2025/26 Housing Revenue Account Capital Plan was considered to be affordable, prudent and sustainable as required by the Prudential Code, and as detailed in Section 8 and as detailed in the amended Appendix 4 to the Report;
- (vi) to approve the updated prudential indicators as shown in the amended 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.

The Clerk circulated to all members of the Committee, a copy of the proposals along with the amended Appendices 1 to 5.

The Committee resolved to adjourn for a twenty-minute period to allow Committee members to consider the proposals and obtain advice from relevant Officers.

The meeting resumed at 2.32pm.

Discussion then took place during which members welcomed the proposals which were seconded by Councillor Braes however, some expressed displeasure at not being consulted beforehand.

Councillor Salmond summed up and the Committee agreed to approve the terms of the proposals outlined in recommendations (i) to (vii) above.