

## ANGUS COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the **HOUSING COMMITTEE** held in the Town and County Hall, Forfar on Thursday 9 October 2003 at 4.25 pm.

**Present:** Councillors FRANK ELLIS, IAN ANGUS, IAN MACKINTOSH, STEWART McGLYNN, THE HON R J LESLIE MELVILLE, Provost BILL MIDDLETON, GLENNIS MIDDLETON, JOY MOWATT, PETER NIELD, KITTY RITCHIE, BILL ROBERTON, JENNIFER SPEIRS, SHEENA WELSH and TERRY WOOD.

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

Councillor ELLIS, Convener, in the Chair.

### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Committee agreed to note that no declarations of interest were made.

### 2. MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The [minute of meeting of this Committee of 21 August 2003](#) was approved as a correct record and signed by the Convener.

### 3. HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME - HRA BLOCK - 2003/2004

With reference to Article 3 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 21 August 2003, there was submitted Report No 1083/03 by the Director of Finance setting out the latest position on the HRA Housing Capital Programme. The Report also detailed the latest estimate for the year and the actual spend figure to the end of August 2003.

The Report advised that the spend achieved to 31 August 2003 on the Housing Capital Programme was £1.161 million, which included internal fees to 30 June 2003.

The Committee, for its interest, agreed to note the figures presented for the HRA Capital Programme.

### 4. ENHANCEMENTS TO REPAIR FINDER WITHIN Sx3 INTEGRATED HOUSING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

With reference to Article 8 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 19 February 2002, there was submitted [Report No 1084/03](#) by the Director of Housing regarding recommended enhancements to "Repair Finder", which was a repair reporting tool in the Sx3 Integrated Housing Management System.

The Report advised that the current version had been purchased, along with the first run of booklets in 2000, as part of the unplanned repair module implementation process. However since that time, a number of developments had occurred which had prompted the Department to investigate enhancements to the tool.

The Committee agreed to approve the enhancement to "Repair Finder" as detailed in the Report at an estimated total cost of £22,800, subject to satisfactory results of a performance test to ensure that the enhancements could be accommodated within the existing corporate network without any due impact on performance.

### 5. WARM DEAL ALLOCATION 2003/2004

With reference to Article 5 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 10 April 2001, there was submitted [Report No 1085/03](#) by the Director of Housing which advised members of Angus Council's provisional allocation for 2003/2004 under the Scottish Executive's Warm Deal Grant to local authorities and how it was intended that the money would be utilised.

The Report advised that the provisional grant allocation for Angus Council for 2003/04 was £95,766 and the Housing Department had indicated to the Scottish Executive that it was the intention to use the grant for upgrading or the replacement of all remaining partial heating systems.

Following discussion and after hearing from the Director of Housing, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the provisional allocation for 2003/04 under the Scottish Executive's Warm Deal Grant to local authorities;
- (ii) to approve that this money be used to help carry out the Council's heating replacement programme;
- (iii) that the Director of Housing write to the Scottish Executive requesting further funding under the Warm Deal grant; and
- (iv) that the officers keep under review, the proposal in Clackmannanshire Council with regards to the provision of gas heating in rural areas.

## **6. HECA PROGRESS**

With reference to Article 14 of the minute of meeting of the Strategic Policy Committee of 24 June 2003, there was submitted [Report No 1086/03](#) by the Director of Housing advising members of the date for the next HECA progress report and requesting approval for changes to relevant staff terms and conditions.

The Report advised that two years on from the last progress report being published, the third progress report was expected to be required by the Scottish Executive by 31 January 2004, although due to internal changes in the Executive, this date was subject to confirmation.

Due to the timing of this deadline, it was noted that the report would be forwarded to the Scottish Executive by the required date and subsequently submitted to the following Housing Committee for homologation.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the expected requirement for the next HECA progress report to be submitted to the Scottish Executive by 31 January 2004; and
- (ii) to approve the establishment of the Home Energy Management Officer post (HSG03J04) grade AP3 as permanent.

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

With reference to Article 11 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 5 June 2003, there was submitted [Report No 1087/03](#) by the Director of Housing advising the Committee of the results of the Annual Council House Garden Competition for 2003, with the awards ceremony having taken place earlier this day.

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

## **8. LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY - THE SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE'S CHANGED PRIORITIES**

With reference to Article 3 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 8 January 2002, there was submitted [Report No 1088/03](#) by the Director of Housing outlining the changes in the Scottish Executive's national housing priorities and advising members on the proposed objectives for the Angus Local Housing Strategy.

The Report advised that the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 made it a requirement of local authorities to prepare and publish Local Housing Strategies by April 2004. The strategy would map out the course between the current operation of the housing system and how Angus Council, with partners, wanted the housing system to operate over a five year period, taking into account the national housing priorities set out by the Scottish Executive.

The proposed objectives of the Local Housing Strategy reflected the recent changes in the Scottish Executive's priorities and, after consultation with all stakeholders, highlighted the issues that were local to the Angus housing system.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the changes in the Scottish Executive's national housing priorities; and
- (ii) to approve the proposed objectives of the Local Housing Strategy.

## **9. INTERNAL QUALITY AND COMPLIANCE REVIEW PROTOCOL**

There was submitted [Report No 1089/03](#) by the Director of Housing seeking approval for the introduction of a framework to review key housing service areas and the involvement of all stakeholders in producing service improvements.

The Report concluded, that by involving customers and staff to shape the way the service was developed in the future, tenants would be given a real stake in the organisation and staff motivated to improve individual and collective performances. The protocol would also demonstrate to Communities Scotland's Regulation and Inspection Team how Angus Council was meeting many of the performance standards.

The Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the contents of the Report; and
- (ii) to approve the implementation of the Internal Quality and Compliance Review Protocol summarised in Appendix 1 to the Report, a full copy of which had been placed in the Members' Lounge.

## **10. RENT ARREARS PERFORMANCE - ANNUAL STATISTICS 2002/2003**

With reference to Article 7 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 1 October 2002, there was submitted [Report No 1090/03](#) by the Director of Housing which provided statistical information in relation to serious arrears cases during 2002/2003.

The Report advised that, with effect from April 2002, the Housing Department had introduced the Arrears Module of the Sx3 computerised housing management system, enabling automation of arrears letters up to Notice of Proceedings stage. This, along with some uncertainty about some tenants' eligibility to housing benefit, had resulted in a vast increase in the number of Notices of Proceedings actually being issued. During the autumn, it was the intention to review the processes involved in the collection of rent arrears within the authority, particularly in light of the introduction of the Debt Arrangement and Attachment Bill.

The Report also advised that the latest Accounts Commission report showed that for 2001/2002 Angus rent arrears as at 31 March 2002 were 4% against the Scottish average of 7.3% resulting in Angus Council having the seventh lowest rent arrears in Scotland.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the Report.

## **11. HOUSING FOOTPATH PROGRAMME 2003/2004**

With reference to Article 9 of the minute of meeting of the Infrastructure Services Committee of 28 August 2003, there was submitted [Joint Report No 1116/03](#) by the Director of Housing and the Director of Roads advising members of the progress on inspecting and assessing the Angus Council housing footpaths, detailing urgent works required and putting forward a provisional programme of resurfacing work for 2003/2004.

The Report advised that, from the inspections carried out to date, some of the footpaths had also been assessed to determine a priority programme for this year. This assessment had been carried out in accordance with the Roads Department assessment and prioritisation procedures for public road footpaths. A numerical scoring system had been applied to these factors to give priority to high usage footpaths for shopping/spinal routes and for amenity use for clinics, schools, sheltered housing etc. The final score then established a priority for each footpath, subject to availability of funding. Appendix 1, attached to the Report, gave the current priorities based on the inspections carried out to date.

The Committee, for its interest, agreed:-

- (i) to note the progress on the inspections and assessments of housing footpaths;
- (ii) to note the estimated cost of urgent repairs required in some areas;
- (iii) to note the proposed factors for assessing and prioritising the programme of resurfacing; and
- (iv) to note the proposed provisional programme of resurfacing works, subject to detailed design and co-ordination of works with other works programmes.

## **12. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

The Committee resolved, in terms of Standing Order 27(2), that the public and press should 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 1 of Schedule 7A to the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, paragraphs 1, 4, 6, 8 and 9.

## **13. IMPROVEMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS APPROVED UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY**

With reference to Article 25 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 21 August 2003, there was submitted and noted [Report No 1054/03](#) by the Director of Planning and Transport detailing applications for improvements grants totalling £33,286.86, which had been approved under delegated authority.

## **14. REPAIR GRANT APPLICATIONS APPROVED UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY**

With reference to Article 26 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 21 August 2003, there was submitted and noted [Report No 1055/03](#) by the Director of Planning and Transport detailing applications for repair grants totalling £9,748.54, which had been approved under delegated authority.

## **15. DISPOSALS**

### **(a) 35 Slade Gardens, Kirriemuir**

There was submitted [Report No 1091/03](#) by the Director of Housing regarding the disposal of an area of ground at Slade Gardens, Kirriemuir, as outlined in the plan attached to the Report.

The Committee agreed that, subject to Section 12 consent being received from Scottish Ministers, the ground be sold to the applicants on appropriate terms and conditions, including the purchasers meeting all of the Council's legal and survey costs.

### **(b) 19 Roseville Place, Arbroath**

There was submitted [Report No 1092/03](#) by the Director of Housing regarding the disposal of an area of ground to the front of 19 Roseville Place, Arbroath, as outlined in the plan attached to the Report.

The Committee agreed that, subject to Section 12 consent being received from Scottish Ministers and the Council's right to the common footpath being disposed to the applicants, the ground be sold to the applicants on appropriate terms and conditions, including the purchasers meeting all of the Council's legal and survey costs.

**(c) Laurelbank, Forfar**

There was submitted [Report No 1093/03](#) by the Director of Housing regarding the disposal of an area of ground at Laurelbank, Forfar, as outlined in the plan attached to the Report.

The Committee agreed that, subject to Section 12 consent being received from Scottish Ministers and planning permission for change of use being granted, the ground be sold to the applicants on appropriate terms and conditions, including the purchasers meeting all of the Council's legal and survey costs.

**(d) 5 Kirkton of Liff**

There was submitted [Report No 1094/03](#) by the Director of Housing regarding the disposal of an area of ground adjacent to 5 Kirkton of Liff as outlined in the plan attached to the Report.

The Committee agreed that, subject to Section 12 consent being received from Scottish Ministers and planning permission for change of use being granted, the ground be sold to the applicants on appropriate terms and conditions, including the purchasers meeting all of the Council's legal and survey costs.

**(e) Lochbank House, Forfar**

There was submitted [Report No 1095/03](#) by the Director of Housing regarding the disposal of an area of ground adjacent to Lochbank House, Forfar as outlined in the plan attached to the Report.

The Committee agreed that, subject to Section 12 consent being received from Scottish Ministers and planning permission for change of use being granted, the ground be sold to the applicants on appropriate terms and conditions, including the purchasers meeting all of the Council's legal and survey costs.

**(f) Glenogil Street, Montrose**

With reference to Article 17 of the minute of meeting of this Committee of 28 May 2002, there was submitted [Report No 1096/03](#) by the Director of Housing regarding the disposal of an additional area of ground adjacent to the main Glenogil Street redevelopment site, Montrose to Hillcrest Housing Association Limited.

The Committee agreed that, subject to Section 12 consent being received from Scottish Ministers, the ground be sold to Hillcrest Housing Association on appropriate terms and conditions.

**(g) 12 and 14 Great Michael Road and 67-69 Ness Drive, Arbroath**

There was submitted [Report No 1097/03](#) by the Director of Housing regarding the disposal of pend access and ground to the owners between 12 and 14 Great Michael Road and also between 67 and 69 Ness Drive, Arbroath and use of tenants' common footpaths as outlined in the plan attached to the Report.

The Committee agreed that, subject to Section 12 consent being received from Scottish Ministers, the pend accesses and ground be disposed of to the owners at 67-69 Ness Drive and owners of 12 and 14 Great Michael Road at nil value including the Council meeting all the conveyancing and other costs.

**16. REQUEST FOR SERVITUDE RIGHT OF ACCESS AT 36 ST MURDOCH'S CRESCENT, ARBROATH**

There was submitted [Report No 1098/03](#) by the Director of Housing regarding the granting of a servitude right of access at 36 St Murdoch's Crescent, Arbroath as outlined in the plan attached to the Report.

The Committee agreed that, subject to planning permission for change of use being granted, the servitude right of access be granted on the appropriate terms and conditions, including the applicants meeting all of the Council's legal and survey costs, and that the ground be hard-surfaced to the Council's satisfaction.

**17. PROPOSED MINOR DEPARTMENTAL STAFFING CHANGES**

There was submitted [Report No 1100/03](#) by the Director of Housing regarding several minor alterations of and consolidations to the Housing Department's staffing structure.

The Committee agreed to approve the recommendations contained within the Report and to note the consequences of the staffing changes.

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

There was submitted [Report No 1099/03](#) by the Director of Housing regarding serious arrears of rent in respect of 23 Council house tenants as detailed in the Appendix to the Report.

The Committee agreed that all 23 cases be monitored and that approval be given to evict, if regular payments to reduce the arrears were not received.

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

With reference to Article 43 of the minute of meeting of the Resources and Central Services Committee of 4 September 2003, there was submitted [Joint Report No 1006/03](#) by the Director of Property Services and the Director of Housing proposing that the new housing office, which had been the subject of a recent marketing exercise, should now be located at Orchardbank, Forfar and seeking approval to negotiate the procurement of these offices with the developer of the business park.

The Committee, for its interest, agreed to approve the recommendations as detailed in the Report.

**20. RETENTION OF GIFTS**

There was submitted [Report No 1101/03](#) by the Director of Housing regarding the receipt of a bequest by a member of staff within the Housing Department.

The Committee approved the retention of the bequest by the member of staff as detailed in the Report.

**\* 21. PRIVATE WATER SUPPLY AT THE FREUCHIES, GLEN ISLA**

There was submitted [Joint Report No 1115/03](#) by the Director of Property Services and Director of Housing advising members of the need to effect a repair to a private water supply serving The Freuchies and seeking a decision regarding the funding of this repair.

COUNCILLOR ELLIS, SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR NIELD, MOVED THAT THE COMMITTEE :

- (I) NOTE THE CURRENT SITUATION REGARDING THE EXPOSED WATER SUPPLY PIPE IN PARTS OF THE WATER TRACK;
- (II) NOTE THE LACK OF RESPONSE FROM SOME OF THE PRIVATE CO-OWNERS OF THE WATER SUPPLY PIPE;
- (III) AUTHORISE THE REPAIR OF THE WATER TRACK AT A TENDERED COST OF £3,985.00 PLUS VAT; AND

- (IV) SEEK TO RECOVER THE APPROPRIATE SHARE OF THE COST FROM THE FIVE PRIVATE OWNERS.

Councillor Mackintosh, seconded by Councillor Leslie Melville, moved, as an amendment, that the Committee approve recommendations 1-3 only as detailed above.

On a vote being taken, the members voted:-

For the motion:-

Councillors Ellis, Angus, McGlynn, Provost Middleton, Councillors Glennis Middleton, Mowatt, Nield, Ritchie, Robertson, Speirs, Welsh and Wood (12);

For the amendment:-

Councillors Mackintosh and Leslie Melville (2).

The motion was thereupon declared carried and became the finding of the meeting.