

Housing Services Committee
8 August 1996

Irvine, 8 August 1996 - At a Meeting of the Housing Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Samuel Taylor, Gena Seales, Thomas Barr, Patrick Browne, James Clements, John Donn, David Gallagher, Margaret Munn, Robert Rae and George Steven.

In Attendance

The Director of Housing Services, J. Paul, the Head of Property Services, J. Hartley, Tenure Manager, E. Munro, Capital Programme Controller (Housing Services), the Architectural Services Manager, D. Nibloe, Principal Officer Accountancy Services (Financial Services), S. Paxton, Administration Officer and D. McCaw, Assistant Administration Officer.

Chair

Mr. Taylor in the Chair.

Apologies for Absence

Thomas Dickie, Jane Gorman and Irene Oldfather.

1. Minutes Confirmed

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 30 May 1996, copies of which had previously been circulated, were confirmed.

2. Irvine Development Corporation: Disposal of Housing Stock: Ballot Results

(Previous Minute Reference - Housing Services Committee - 30 May 1996)

Submitted report by the Director of Housing Services regarding the results of the ballot exercise on IDC stock disposal.

The ballot exercise which took place over a 3 week period, following intensive activity by both bidders and a one week "cooling off" period showed a high turnout and concluded on Monday 8 July 1996.

The Council was successful in 4 of the 5 ballot areas with a total stock at present of 2045 houses which are due to transfer to the Council in late November 1996 representing a sizeable addition to its stock. Irvine Housing Association were successful in their bid for the Kilwinning area with a present stock of 732 houses.

The Council's success in the ballot exercise means that staff who will transfer from IDC, together with systems and working practices, will require to be integrated in a relatively short period of time. This will have an impact on the structure and operation of the Housing Services Directorate. Meetings are being held with IDC to progress matters and to ensure continuity of service to tenants.

The Committee expressed its wish that the Tenant's Consultative Forum, which provided support and advice to tenants during the ballot process and had been supported by IDC, continue to be supported by the Corporation until the transfer of housing stock to the Council.

The Committee agreed (a) that representations be made to IDC seeking their continued support for the Tenant's Consultative Forum until the completion of the transfer process; (b) that the Director of Housing Services report on the proposed alterations to the structure and operation of his Directorate to deal with the transfer of stock; and (c) otherwise to note the results of the ballot exercise.

3. Kilwinning: 12 Abbots Place

Submitted report by the Director of Housing Services regarding the condition of property at Abbots Place, Kilwinning.

In the mid 1980s Cunninghame District Council was concerned about structural damage to properties in Kilwinning caused by mine workings. Structural and mineral reports were obtained in respect of the block at 49/51 Stobbs Crescent, Kilwinning and the house at 12 Abbots Place, Kilwinning. The District Council pursued a case against the National Coal Board through the Courts in respect of 49 Stobbs Crescent, having been unsuccessful with claims to the NCB for all of the properties. The judgement in May 1992, however, ruled in favour of British Coal. During this time no action was taken on 12 Abbots Place.

A new structural report has been obtained from mining engineers which confirms that the property at 12 Abbots Place is showing signs of severe structural distress due to very localised mineral subsidence while the immediately adjoining houses at numbers 11 and 13 show no evidence of being similarly affected. Following consideration of the options and associated costs, it is proposed that the property be demolished and the site landscaped at a cost of £15,000 which would be met from the 1996/97 HRA Capital Programme with an ongoing requirement for the Council to maintain the site.

The Committee agreed to authorise the Director of Housing Services to (a) demolish the property; (b) soft landscape the cleared site and erect suitable boundary fencing; and (c) arrange for the site to be maintained by the Director of Commercial Services as an open space within a North Ayrshire Council housing area.

4. Saltcoats: Knox Place: Extension to Area Initiative

Submitted report by the Director of Housing Services on a proposed extension to the Knox Place Area Initiative, Saltcoats.

The Knox Place Area Initiative makes provision for major fabric repairs and environmental improvement works to 55 houses in the Knox Place/Anderson Drive area of Saltcoats which have been identified for Area Initiative treatment and is programmed for completion in September 1996. Representations have been received, however, from the residents of the remaining houses in Anderson Drive that similar works be carried out to their houses which are in the same condition as those receiving treatment.

There are advantages in proceeding with an extension to the current contract in terms of lower costs, co-ordination of works and tenant satisfaction. The funding would require to be met from slippage in the 1996/97 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme which could be identified at the mid term review of the current year's programme in August/September.

The Committee agreed (a) in principle to extend the Area Initiative contract to the remaining 15 houses in Anderson Drive; and (b) that the additional cost of approximately £150,000 be funded from the Housing (HRA) Capital Programme subject to the Director of Housing Services being satisfied that the additional cost can be accommodated in 1996/97, failing which provision be made in the 1997/98 Capital Programme for the work.

5. Ardrossan: Flats above Shops at Ashgrove Road/Lawson Drive

(Previous Minute Reference - Housing Services Committee - 30 May 1996)

Submitted report by the Director of Housing Services on the flats above shops at Ashgrove Road/Lawson Drive, Ardrossan.

On 30 May 1996 the Committee agreed that a Member/Officer Working Group consider options for the future use of the flats and report. A site meeting was held on 17 June 1996, and it was agreed that a meeting be held with the shop owners and occupiers to ascertain their views on the extent of the problem.

This meeting was subsequently held and the shop owners and occupiers indicated that they wished to continue to trade from the premises and were anxious to assist the Council in finding a solution to the problem. The Officers undertook to consult and inform shop owners and occupiers of any proposals for the flats.

As a first stage, it is proposed that the possibility and the costs of a physical solution to the site be examined which could involve major structural changes to the properties located above the shops and to the concrete overhang above them. The involvement of other agencies in resolving the problems associated with the flats will also be pursued.

After a full discussion the Committee agreed that the Director of Housing Services, in conjunction with the Architectural Services Manager, submit a report on the proposals for the physical and structural alterations to the layout of the flats and associated costs to the next meeting of the Committee.

6. Compensation Payments

Submitted report by the Director of Housing Services regarding compensation payments to tenants.

Cunninghame District Council made fixed compensation payments to tenants in certain limited circumstances when they were subject to disturbance during any renovation or reinstatement work as it was the policy of the then District Council to concentrate available financial resources on the major repair and improvement works.

Some tenants have expressed dissatisfaction with this policy which continues to apply in North Ayrshire.

The Committee agreed that the Director of Housing Services review the present system of compensation payments to tenants and report to the Housing Services Committee with recommendations on its future operation.

7. Strategic Agreement: Smaller Urban Renewal Initiatives (SURIs)

(Previous Minute Reference - Housing Services Committee - 18 April 1996)

Submitted report by the Chief Executive regarding funding for Smaller Urban Renewal Initiatives (SURIs).

The Housing Services Committee at its meeting on 18 April 1996 agreed that representations be made to the Scottish Office seeking additional funding for Smaller Urban Renewal Initiatives.

The Council has made representations to the Scottish Minister for Education, Housing and Fisheries, to reconsider the funding arrangements by providing an additional allocation to the Council to meet the costs of these initiatives. The Scottish Office Development Department have now advised that all resources currently available for housing in 1996/97 have been fully allocated and

they are unable to give assurances about the prospects for further supplementary allowances later in the year. They have however indicated that if resources became available consideration would be given to the Council's representations.

Noted.

8. Gas Maintenance Contract

Submitted report by the Director of Housing Services detailing the terms and conditions of the gas maintenance contract.

Around 13,000 council houses, all of which have had heating systems installed in the last twenty years, are covered by a three star gas maintenance contract with James Frew Limited, Stevenston. This is due to expire on 30 September 1996. This contract incorporates an annual service, all necessary repairs and the replacement of defective parts for an annual fixed price based on the number of systems in the contract.

The terms of the existing contract have been revised taking into account past experience in the operation of the contract, current safety regulations and the increasing importance placed on performance measurement and customer care. Tenders have been invited from appropriate contractors for a further 3 year period.

The cost of the contract will be met from the Housing Revenue Budget and some additional staff time will be required to monitor the increased level of performance information to be provided by the contractor.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to approve the terms and conditions of contract.

9. Tenders

(a) Maintenance Contract for Gas Central Heating Systems and Ancillary Equipment

Submitted report by the Director of Housing Services on tenders received for gas central heating systems and ancillary equipment.

After discussion the Committee agreed to authorise the Director of Housing Services to accept the lowest tender of £401,556 from James Frew Limited, Stevenston.

(b) Central Heating Programme 1997: Castlepark, Irvine

Submitted report by the Architectural Services Manager on tenders received for the installation of central heating to 296 houses in Castlepark, Irvine.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to accept the lowest tender of £582,667.60 from Thomson Construction, Ayr.

10. Private Sector Housing Grants

(a) Delegated Powers

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix H1) by the Chief Executive advising of the private sector housing grants approved in exercise of the powers delegated to him.

Noted.

(b) Grant Applications

Submitted the annexed report (Appendix H2) by the Director of Housing Services on

applications for improvement, disabled, lead replacement and environmental improvement grants.

The Committee agreed the decisions intimated in the final columns of the said Appendix.

11. Irvine: 16 Townhead: Closing Order

Submitted report by the Director of Housing Services on the condition of a flat at 16 Townhead, Irvine which does not meet the tolerable standard as defined by section 86 of the Housing (Scotland) Act, 1987.

The Committee agreed that a Closing Order in terms of Section 114 of the said Act be served on the ground floor flat at 16 Townhead, Irvine.

12. Saltcoats: 50 Parkend Road: Revocation of Closing Order

Submitted report by the Director of Housing Services on the Closing Order served on 12 January 1996 on the first floor left flat at 50 Parkend Road, Saltcoats which now meets the tolerable standard as defined by Section 86 of the Housing (Scotland) Act, 1987.

The Committee agreed to the revocation of this Closing Order.

13. Conferences

Submitted report by the Director of Housing Services on invitations received to attend the following Conferences:-

(i) The Tenant Participation Advisory Service Annual Conference and AGM to be held in Ayr on 8-10 November 1996;

(ii) The Chartered Institute of Housing in Scotland Summer School for Councillors to be held in Edinburgh on 20 and 21 September 1996; and

(iii) The "Shelter" Seminar entitled "The Use of Temporary Accommodation for Homeless Households" to be held in Stirling on 22 August 1996.

After discussion the Committee agreed (a) that all Members of the Committee be invited to attend (i); (b) that the Chair and Vice-Chair attend (ii); and (c) not to be represented at (iii).

14. Urgent Item

The Chair agreed to the consideration of the undernoted item as a matter of urgency:-

(a) Kilwinning: Montgomerie Terrace

The Committee noted that concern had been expressed by local residents about the high levels of vandalism and drug abuse in the vicinity of vacant properties at Montgomerie Terrace, Kilwinning. The properties were the subject of major environmental improvements in 1991, but despite a short term arrest in their decline, the cycle of decline has resumed. The Chair requested that the problems associated with the properties be addressed on a multi-agency basis.

The Director of Housing Services advised of concerns regarding criminal activities in the area and that his Directorate had undertaken a survey of the views of local people. He also acknowledged the necessity of involving Strathclyde Police, the Social Work, and Community and Recreational Services Directorates and other agencies to tackle the problems associated with Montgomerie Terrace. The results of the survey would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Corsehill Playgroup, which served the families in Mongomerie Terrace, can no longer be accommodated in Corsehill Primary School and it is proposed that while the Director of Community

and Recreational Services investigates alternative properties for the playgroup to use, a vacant property in Montgomerie Terrace be let to the playgroup on a temporary basis.

The Committee agreed (a) that a report on proposals to tackle the concerns raised over Montgomerie Terrace, Kilwinning, including the results of the survey, be submitted to the Committee; and (b) subject to the suitability of the property, to let a house at Montgomerie Terrace to the Corsehill Playgroup on terms and conditions to be agreed with the Director of Housing Services.

The Meeting ended at 3.00 p.m.

**Housing Services Committee
08/08/96**

Appendix No
HOU 1

Code	Ref No & Date Rec'd	Name & Address of Applicant (and of Owner if different)	Property to be Repaired/Improved	Lowest Estimate	Amount & Rate of Grant
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APPLICATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT GRANT

19	IG/64/96 28/3/96	Mr. J. Dobbie	Lowhouse Cottage Threepwood Road Beith	892	669 (75%)
19	IG/87/96 4/7/96	The National Trust for Scotland Greenbank House Glasgow	Sylvania Brodick Country Park Arran	882	662 (75%)

APPLICATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT GRANT (DISABLED OCCUPANT)

5	IG/93/96 17/7/96	Flora Mutch	3 Lawbrae West Kilbride	75	56 (75%)
5	IG/84/96 26/6/96	Norma Tuffy	6 Muir Drive Irvine	1045	784 (75%)
5	IG/97/96 24/7/96	Patricia Campbell	Craignish 8 Buchanan Street Largs	9172	6879 (75%)
5	IG/99/96 26/7/96	Agnes McEwan	11 Bowfield Road West Kilbride	127	95 (75%)
5	IG/98/96 26/7/96	Euphemia Young	34 Gateside Street West Kilbride	185	139 (75%)
5	IG/95/96 17/7/96	James & Mary Cameron	86 Culzean Place Kilwinning	1400	1050 (75%)

APPLICATIONS FOR LEAD REPLACEMENT GRANT

15	LG/50/96 1/7/96	Linda Beattie	116 Bank Street Irvine	735	617 (90%)
15	LG/53/96 4/7/96	Hugh Wilson	2 Garthland Drive Ardrossan	652	542 (90%)
15	LG/54/96 10/7/96	Thomas Mutch	18 May Street Largs	299	224 (90%)
15	LG/55/96 17/7/96	Elizabeth Mackay	9 Irvine Road Largs	302	227 (90%)

APPLICATIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT GRANT

22	EG/6/96 15/3/96	Lodge 320 Ardrossan per CRGP Architects 26 Herbert Street	1/3 Harbour Street	23400	1800
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Glasgow