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THE FIFE COUNCIL - PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – BLENDED MEETING

Committee Room 2, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

8 June, 2023

10.00am – 1.00pm

PRESENT: Councillors Eugene Clarke (Convener), Blair Allan, Ken Caldwell, Alistair Cameron, Brian Goodall, Peter Gulline, Allan Knox, Donald Lothian, Julie MacDougall, Lynn Mowatt, Bailey-Lee Robb, Sam Steele and Darren Watt.

ATTENDING: Michael Enston, Executive Director - Communities; John Mills, Head of Housing Services, Gavin Smith, Service Manager (Housing Management Executive), Joan Lamie, Service Manager (Housing Estates and Safer Communities) Housing Services; Paul Vaughan, Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods; Patricia Spacey, Safer Communities Team Manager, Leisure & Cultural Services; Zahida Ramzan, Policy Co-ordinator - Equalities, Community Investment; Vicki Greig, HR Lead Officer, Human Resources Service; Helena Couperwhite, Service Manager and Michelle Hyslop, Committee Officer, Committee Services.

ALSO ATTENDING: Councillors Linda Erskine and Judy Hamilton, Adam Smith, Chief Inspector, Police Scotland, Stewart Nicholson, Assistant Deputy Chief Officer and Steven Michie, Group Commander, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors Ann Verner and Jan Wincott.

URGENT ITEM BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE CONVENER

In terms of Standing Order No. 3.8 (2), the Convener advised of a motion that been proposed and agreed at the Cabinet Committee on the 1 June, 2023 - Urgent Motion – Scottish Fire & Rescue Service Cuts (2023 CC 62 – Para 116) which asked the Committee to urgently consider the terms of the motion following the announcement that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service were proposing reductions in service appliances including fire engines and height appliances removed from across Fife. The item was considered at para. 67 below.

59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted in terms of Standing Order No. 7.1.

60. MINUTE

The Committee considered the minute of the People & Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting of 23 March, 2023.

Decision

The Committee approved the minute.

61. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE LOCAL PLAN 12 MONTHS PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee considered a report by the Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire & Rescue Services, providing an update on incident information for the period 1 April, 2022 - 31 March 2023.

Decision

The Committee noted the progress of the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service across a range of key performance indicators as detailed in the report.

The meeting adjourned at 11.35am and reconvened at 11.45am

62. FIFE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing Services, updating members on the progress of the Fife Community Safety Partnership in delivering the current Community Safety Partnership Delivery Plan for 2022-23.

Decision

The Committee noted the progress to date.

63. VOIDS SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing Services, providing an update on Voids management, which is a core HRA Budget and Business Plan priority. The report highlighted the overspends in the repairs budget and income lost through properties being empty, which had resulted in critical short, medium and longer-term financial impacts. The report provided members with the revised Housing and Building Services Voids Service Improvement plan to improve the financial situation.

Decision

The Committee:-

- (1) noted the proposed service improvement plan that would focus on customer and financial benefits;
- (2) noted the on-going Tenant Scrutiny Panel focus on Voids improvements; and
- (3) agreed that the Scrutiny Panel Report and any resultant action plan would be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Robb left during consideration of the above item.

64. TENANT LED SCRUTINY INTO SATISFACTION WITH THE QUALITY OF THE HOME

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing Services, updating members on the findings of the recent tenant scrutiny panel report that considered the factors affecting tenants' satisfaction within their homes. The report had been considered by the Housing Management Executive, and the data

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would help to inform the actions that need to be included in the Housing Service Pathway to Improvement as part of the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC).

Decision

The Committee noted that: -

- (1) a written response would be provided to the tenant's scrutiny panel by Autumn, 2023;
- (2) the recommendations identified in the scrutiny panel report would be used to inform improvement actions and performance targets for the year ahead;
- (3) Housing Services would continue to work in collaboration with the tenant's movement in Fife and involve them in decision making; and
- (4) the panel approach provided an opportunity to test and improve key performance areas and services delivered to tenants within the Council.

Councillor Watt left prior to consideration of the following item.

65. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY OUTCOMES PROGRESS 2021-2023

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods, updating members on the Equality & Diversity outcomes for 2021-2023, and in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.

Decision

The Committee noted: -

- (1) the content of the report; and
- (2) that the draft outcomes were published online at the end of April, 2023.

66. PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services, asking members to consider the future workplan for the People & Communities Scrutiny Committee.

Decision

The Committee: -

- (1) noted the content of the forward work programme for the People & Communities Scrutiny Committee;
- (2) acknowledged that Councillor Goodall asked officers to bring forward a report on the housing functional needs assessment to the next meeting in August 2023;
- (3) agreed that a further report on Voids management would be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee; and

- (4) agreed that the Cafe Inc working group should have some more meetings prior to a report on Cafe Inc being considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

67. URGENT ITEM BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE CONVENER

The Committee considered a 5-minute presentation from members of the Fire Brigade Union in response to the proposed cuts.

The Committee then heard from Stewart Nicholson, Assistant Deputy Chief Officer, and Steven Michie, Group Commander from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in relation to the proposals to withdraw appliances from stations in Fife. Having considered the proposals and the background to them, the Scrutiny Committee resolved to:

- (1) express it's significant concerns about the proposals and to ask the Council Leader and Chief Executive to write to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the Scottish Government asking them to withdraw the proposals; and
- (2) ask officers to arrange a further meeting with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to review the data and risk assessments behind the proposals and to invite all elected members to attend.