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HOUSING1995M

Motherwell, 6 December 1995 at 4 pm.

A Meeting of the HOUSING COMMITTEE

PRESENT

Councillor McLaughlin, Chair; Councillor Craigie, Vice-Chair;  
Councillors  
Beekman, Chadha, Connelly, Cox, Curley, Foley, Gormill, Griffin, Hogg,  
Lafferty, Logue, Lyle, McAlorum, McCabe, Mathieson, Moran, G. Murray,  
Nolan, Robertson, Sullivan, Wallace and Wilson.

IN ATTENDANCE

The Head of Central Services, Director of Housing, Director of  
Construction  
Services, Director of Finance, Head of Local Housing Services and Head  
of  
Accounting Services.

APOLOGIES

Councillors A. Burns, H. McGuigan, McKendrick, W. Martin and V. Murray.

NON-HRA AND HRA BUDGET 1996-97

1. There was submitted a report dated 22 November 1995 by the Director of Finance enclosing the Stage 1 Budget for 1996-97 in respect of the Non-HRA Budget for 1996-97. The Director of Finance and Director of Housing then reported orally on the progress being made with regard to the HRA Budget for 1996-97.

Decided:

- (1) That the terms of the Stage 1 Budget for 1996-97 in respect of the Non-HRA Budget be noted and remitted to the Finance Committee for further consideration, and
- (2) That consideration of the HRA Budget for 1996-97 be continued to a special meeting pending a report by the Director of Housing.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING - INTERIM ESTABLISHMENT

2. With reference to paragraph 8 of the Minute of the meeting of the Special Policy and Resources Committee held on 7 November 1995 there was submitted a report dated 31 October 1995 by the Director of Housing regarding the staff structure for his Department in respect of the third tier and beyond, which had previously been approved by the Council at their meeting on 9 November 1995.

Decided:

- (1) That the proposed staff structure, as previously approved and as detailed in the Director of Housing's report dated 31 October 1995 be noted, and
- (2) That the officials be authorised to select and match staff to these positions in accordance with Council policy and Staff Commission guidance on appropriate matching procedures.

#### SHORT TERM HOUSING ISSUES - PROGRESS REVIEW

3. With reference to paragraph 2 of the Minute of the meeting of this

Committee held on 25 October 1995 there was submitted a report dated 23 November 1995 by the Director of Housing advising of the progress which had been made on issues affecting his Department and requiring to be addressed in the short term.

Decided:

- (1) That the terms of the report be noted, and
- (2) That it be recorded that the Council express its grave concern regarding the implications for the Housing Capital Programme in North Lanarkshire of the recent changes in respect of the use of capital receipts, and make urgent representations, including representations through the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, with regard thereto.

#### HOUSING FINANCE - POLICY REVIEW

4. With reference to paragraph 2 of the Minute of the meeting of this

Committee held on 25 October 1995 there was submitted a report dated 13 November 1995 by the Director of Housing containing a review and proposals in respect of the various housing finance functions to be carried out by his Department.

Decided:

- (1) That the Rent Collection Policy Statement, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the Director of Housing's report, be approved and adopted;
- (2) That the Rent Accounting Policy Statement, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the Director of Housing's report, be approved and adopted;
- (3) That no action be taken meantime to introduce a standard rent charging basis of 48 weeks and that the current arrangements continue unaltered during 1996-97;
- (4) That it be agreed that the rent structures operating within each of the merging constituent authorities continue

meantime, pending the outcome of a comprehensive review to be the subject of a further report by the Director of Housing;

- (5) That it be agreed that, in implementing any increase in housing rents or other charges for lock-ups and garage sites etc. prior to 1 April 1996 consideration be given to weighting such increases in such a way as to start addressing the major differences in charge levels, and
- (6) That the appropriate officials be authorised to negotiate, in principle, regarding the provision of a Home Contents Insurance Scheme for 1996-97, as outlined in paragraph 6.1 of the Director of Housing's report.

#### ESTATE MANAGEMENT - POLICY REVIEW

5. With reference to paragraph 2 of the Minute of the meeting of this

Committee held on 25 October 1995 there was submitted a report dated 22 November 1995 by the Director of Housing containing a review and proposals regarding the Estate Management functions to be carried out by his Department.

Decided:

- (1) That, with the exception of the proposals regarding open plan front gardens, the various proposals contained within Appendix 1 of the Director of Housing's report be approved and adopted;
- (2) That the Director of Housing's proposals regarding open plan front gardens be continued pending a further report by him;
- (3) That the Estate Management Policy Statement, as detailed in Appendix 2 of the Director of Housing's report, be approved and adopted, and
- (4) That the Anti-Social Behaviour Policy Statement, as detailed in Appendix 3 of the Director of Housing's report, be approved and adopted.

#### HOUSING BENEFIT - POLICY REVIEW

6. With reference to paragraph 2 of the minute of the meeting of this

Committee held on 25 October 1995 there was submitted a report dated 21 November 1995 by the Director of Housing containing a review and proposals in respect of the Housing Benefit functions to be carried out by his Department.

Decided:

- (1) That the Council agree to adopt a standard administration

procedure for administering housing benefits;

- (2) That the intention to produce standardised year end termination letters on existing stationery be noted;
- (3) That it be agreed to introduce a combined housing and Council tax benefit claim form for all tenants, subject to the satisfactory resolution of identified problems;
- (4) That the intention to re-negotiate service level agreements with the Benefits Agency be noted;
- (5) That the Director of Housing be authorised to progress negotiations with a view to placing a Benefits Agency remote access terminal within North Lanarkshire;
- (6) That the intention to re-negotiate service level agreements with Employment Services Job Centres and implement a fraud service level agreement be noted;
- (7) That it be agreed to adopt a local scheme resolution to disregard all income from war widows' and war disablement pensions, as defined in Section 139(11) of the Social Security Administration Act 1992, and the Income-Related Benefits Schemes Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 1995 (SI 1995 No. 2792), and
- (8) That an intention to establish a standard review cycle with common benefit periods for housing benefit and Council tax benefit claims be noted.

#### TRAVELLING PEOPLE - PITCH TARGETS

7. There was submitted a report dated 15 November 1995 by the Director of Housing enclosing copies of (1) a letter dated 5 October 1995 from the Secretary of State's Advisory Committee on Scotland's Travelling People advising of the Council's pitch targets for travelling people, and (2) a letter dated 16 November 1995 being his response to the Advisory Committee on behalf of the Council.

Decided:

- (1) That the action taken by the Director of Housing to respond to the Secretary of State's Advisory Committee on Scotland's Travelling People be homologated;
- (2) That the terms of the report be noted, and
- (3) That the Director of Housing be instructed to submit a further report on the non-harassment policy.

#### POSITIVE ACTION IN HOUSING LIMITED

8. There was submitted a report dated 13 November 1995 by the Director of Housing advising of an invitation received from

Positive

Action in Housing Limited for the Council to become affiliate members in 1996-97.

Decided:

- (1) That the Council confirm its support for Positive Action in Housing Limited by agreeing to become affiliate members during 1996-97, and
- (2) That appropriate provision be made in the revenue estimates for 1996-97.

SCOTTISH POWER - PRESENTATION

9. There was submitted a report dated 22 November 1995 by the Director of Housing advising that Scottish Power had extended an invitation to all elected members and senior officials to attend a presentation at which the Company would provide an update on its recent developments across its full range of activities.

Decided: That the Director of Administration be authorised to accept the invitation from Scottish Power to provide a presentation which will take place on a date to be arranged during January or February 1996 and to which all members will be invited.

SCOTTISH NATIONAL HOUSING AND TOWN PLANNING COUNCIL - MEMBERSHIP

10. There was submitted a report dated 22 November 1995 from the Director of Housing enclosing a copy of a letter from the Chairman of the Scottish National Housing and Town Planning Council inviting the Council to become members of the Scottish National Housing and Town Planning Council.

Decided: That the Council agree to become members of the Scottish National Housing and Town Planning Council with effect from 1 April 1996 subject to the cost being met jointly by the Housing and Planning and Development Budgets for 1996-97.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION - "HOUSING - MAKING A DIFFERENCE"

11. There was submitted a report dated 22 November 1995 by the Director of Housing enclosing a copy of an invitation from the Chartered Institute of Housing to be represented at its Annual Conference and Exhibition entitled "Housing - Making a Difference" to be held in Harrogate from 10 to 14 June 1996.

Decided: That the Council agree, in principle, to be represented at the Annual Conference and Exhibition entitled "Housing - Making a Difference".