

Motherwell, 20 November 2019 at 10 am.

A Meeting of the **COMMUNITIES AND HOUSING COMMITTEE**

PRESENT

Councillor Brannan-McVey, Convener; Councillor O'Rourke, Vice-Convener; Councillors Burgess, Burrows, Cochrane, S. Coyle, Currie, Di Mascio, Docherty, Doolan, Douglas, Fotheringham, Gallacher, Goldie, Graham, Kelly, Kerr, Lennon, Logue, McLaren, McManus, McNally, Pettigrew, Roarty, Stocks, Stubbs, Alan Valentine, Annette Valentine and Weir.

ALSO PRESENT

In accordance with Standing Order 64(A), Councillors Castles, Fisher and McCulloch attended as substitutes for Councillors McVey, Jones and Morgan respectively.

CHAIR

Councillor Brannan-McVey (Convener) presided.

IN ATTENDANCE

The Executive Director (Enterprise and Communities); Head of Business (Housing Property and Projects); Head of Planning and Regeneration; Head of Housing Solutions; Business Finance Manager and Committee Officer.

APOLOGIES

Provost Jones; Councillors Bonnar, M. Coyle, Fannan, Gourlay, MacGregor, McNeil, McVey and Morgan.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN TERMS OF THE ETHICAL STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE ETC (SCOTLAND) ACT 2000

1. Councillors Douglas and Alan Valentine, by virtue of their membership of Town Centre Activities Limited, declared an interest in paragraph 12 and took no part in the consideration thereof.

Councillor Kelly, by virtue of a family member's employment, declared an interest in paragraph 18 and took no part in the consideration thereof.

VICE-CONVENER'S REMARKS

2. The Vice Convener advised that four teams within Housing Solutions had been shortlisted for the CIH Scotland 2019 Excellence Awards held in Glasgow in October 2019 and had been successful in the following categories "Excellence in Delivering Homelessness Services – Access to Opportunities"; "Professional Service Provider of the Year – Community Safety – CCTV Services to Housing", and "Housing Team of the Year", Thereon the Vice-Convener, on behalf of the Committee, congratulated all officers from each of the teams.

RENT STRUCTURE REVIEW - MAKING RENT FAIRER

3. With reference to paragraph 8 of the Minute of the meeting of the former Enterprise and Housing Committee held on 10 August 2017 when, *inter alia*, approval had been given, (1) in principle, to the proposals to refine the standard rent structure; (2) to the proposals for a tenant consultation exercise to be undertaken, and (3) for the submission of a report to a future meeting of the Committee on the outcome of the tenant consultation, there was submitted a report by the Head of Housing Solutions regarding the positive outcome of the tenant consultation undertaken in respect of the rent structure review carried out in June 2018 (a) outlining the background to, and the need for, a review of the rent structure; (b) advising that the Council consulted with North Lanarkshire Federation of Tenants and Residents Association and that feedback obtained from tenants' groups had been incorporated in to refine the proposed rent structure before launching the full consultation with all tenants; (c) enclosing, in Appendix 1 to the report, a copy of the rent structure consultation report; (d) setting out, within the report, the indicative weekly rents by property type and size, and (e) proposing (A) that the new rent structure be implemented from 1 April 2020, and (B) that the Housing Solutions and Strategic Communications Team develop a Tenant Communication Plan to ensure that tenants are fully informed of the changes to the rent structure.

Thereon, the Business Finance Manager provided an overview of the process and responded to Members' questions.

Decided:

- (1) that the outcome of the rent structure consultation, as set out within Appendix 1 to the report, be noted;
- (2) that the implementation of the revised rent structure from 1 April 2020, as set out within the report, be approved, and
- (3) that the report be otherwise noted.

THE PLAN FOR NORTH LANARKSHIRE: STRATEGIC PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

4. With reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of the meeting of the Policy and Strategy Committee held on 26 September 2019, when the implementation of the Strategic Performance Framework was agreed, there was submitted a report by the Head of Business Solutions (1) outlining the next steps in terms of the reporting arrangements to Service Committees for the Strategic Performance Framework; (2) advising that the aim was (a) to ensure that evidence presented to the Committee would allow day to day activities and progress towards achieving the shared ambition to be regularly reported, monitored, assessed and scrutinised, and (b) to enable performance issues to be identified and any required remedial action undertaken to ensure that the Council remained on track towards achieving the shared ambition; (3) detailing, in the Appendix to the report, extracts, relevant to the remit of the Committee, of the Strategic Performance Framework, and (4) intimating that future reports would be submitted to Committee during 2020, providing information on performance against the items outlined in the Strategic Performance Framework extracts.

Decided:

- (1) that the content of the report and the accompanying Appendices be noted, and
- (2) that the next steps, as outlined in the report, be noted.

SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR: 2019 LANDLORD REPORT

5. With reference to paragraph 2 of the Minute of the meeting of the former Enterprise and Housing Committee held on 14 November 2018, there was submitted a report by the Head of Housing Solutions (1) providing details of the role of the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) and its requirement for Scottish landlords to collect and provide key information on their performance, in achieving the Scottish Social Housing Charter (SSHC) outcomes and standards, in an Annual Return on the Charter (ARC); (2) advising that, following submission of each Local Authority and Registered Social Landlords' ARC, the SHR published a Landlord profile of all Social Landlords which allowed tenants to compare Landlords' performance across Scotland; (3) enclosing, in the Appendix to the report, the North Lanarkshire Council Landlord report; (4) indicating that the Council was performing above the Scottish average in a number of areas and that average weekly rents were below the Scottish average; (5) detailing, within the report, information regarding homes and rent, tenant satisfaction, quality and maintenance of homes, neighbourhoods, and value for money, and (6) informing, with regard to neighbourhoods, that 96.3% of anti-social behaviour cases were resolved within the targets agreed locally, compared to the Scottish Average of 87.9%.

Thereon, the Head of Housing Solutions spoke to the report and responded to Members' questions, following which it was proposed that a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee, providing details of the number of anti-social behaviour enquiries and the timescale for resolving each enquiry.

Decided:

- (1) that the Scottish Housing Regulator Landlord report, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, which identified North Lanarkshire Council's performance in relation to the Scottish Social Housing Charter, be noted;
- (2) that the progress being made in the production of the Council's annual report to tenants be noted;
- (3) that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee providing details of the number of anti-social behaviour enquiries, and the timescale for resolving each enquiry, and
- (4) that the report be otherwise noted.

UPDATE ON OPEN MARKET PURCHASE SCHEME

6. With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute of the meeting of the former Enterprise and Housing Committee held on 5 September 2018, there was submitted a report by the Head of Planning and Regeneration providing an update on the progress of the Open Market Purchase Scheme (OMPS) (1) outlining the background to the OMPS which was an extension of the Empty Homes Purchase Scheme (EHPS); (2) intimating that the OMPS increased the supply of housing to meet housing needs as part of the Council's New Supply Programme; (3) advising (a) that, between 1 April and 11 October 2019, 68 properties had been purchased, with a further 41 at conveyancing stage and 35 being surveyed, and (b) that, of the properties purchased so far this financial year, 25 were categorised as having been long term empty properties, and 43 had been purchased through the Open Market Purchase Scheme; (4) indicating that there were six owners, within the first phase of the Re-provisioning Programme, and engagement with the owners was ongoing, and four of the owners had now sold their properties to the Council, and discussions were taking place with the remaining two, and (5) informing that a six monthly update on the OMPS would be provided to a future meeting of the Committee.

Decided:

- (1) that a six monthly update be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee, and
- (2) that the report be otherwise noted.

TOWER STRATEGY UPDATE

7. With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 22 May 2019, there was submitted a joint report by the Head of Housing (Property and Projects) and the Head of Housing Solutions providing an update on progress relating to fire safety within high rise towers in North Lanarkshire and on the Re-provisioning Programme (1) detailing, within the report, the current position with regard to the three phased investigation of the 48 high rise tower blocks; (2) advising that an action plan had been developed with proposals to finalise the issues identified from both the phase 1 and 2 surveys, and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service findings from their visits and checks of communal areas within the towers; (3) setting out the current progress of the Re-provisioning Programme, and (4) indicating that the pre-construction works at the four blocks in Coatbridge, namely Blairgrove, Merryston, Glen and Millbrae Courts, had commenced.

Decided:

- (1) that the progress of the ongoing structural surveys of the Council's tower stock be noted;
- (2) that it be noted that the construction works to the four towers at Blairgrove, Merryston, Glen and Millbrae Courts in Coatbridge had commenced;
- (3) that it be noted that the remedial works for the stage two enhanced fire safety works were progressing and scheduled for completion in early 2021;
- (4) that the progress of the demolition and safety/fire risk assessment programmes be noted;
- (5) that the progress in relation to the tower strategy Re-provisioning Programme be noted, and
- (6) that the report be otherwise noted.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT ASSISTANCE FUND

8. With reference to paragraph 12 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 11 September 2019 when it was agreed that the Head of Housing Solutions would investigate the appropriateness of establishing a fund to assist tenants who were falling into arrears due to the built-in waiting time for Universal Credit Payments to be processed and paid, there was submitted a report by the Head of Housing Solutions seeking approval to establish and administer a Universal Credit Assistance Fund and (1) advising that it was estimated there were approximately 30 Council tenants making a new Universal Credit (UC) claim each week, and that this figure may vary as UC continued to be rolled out; (2) proposing (a) that, in order to address the built-in waiting time, the Council assist all new UC claimants who had arrears due to the in-built waiting period; (b) that all eligible tenants would be credited with five weeks rent to alleviate the short-fall and to cover the "technical arrear" which would be recovered from the tenant by setting up a Standing Order, and (c) that the amount recovered each month would be dependent on the individual tenant's circumstances, be determined after a full income maximisation assessment had been concluded, and be set at an affordable level to minimise the financial impact of the repayment agreement; (3) intimating (a) that all new claims would be identified via the landlord portal, which is a Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) system to advise the Council of new UC claims, and (b) that an Income Maximiser would make contact and engage with

each tenant to investigate eligibility for the fund and maximise all supports available, and (4) detailing, within the report, two exceptions to eligibility for the fund.

Decided:

- (1) that the procedure developed to implement and administer the Universal Credit Assistance Fund be approved, and
- (2) that the report be otherwise noted.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - 2020/21 REVENUE ESTIMATES

9. With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of the meeting of North Lanarkshire Council held on 14 December 2017 when, inter alia, it had been agreed that the average weekly rental be increased by 5% for 2018/19, and 5% for the subsequent three years, subject to six monthly monitoring reports being submitted to Committee with a review being undertaken after two years, there was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Enterprise and Communities) providing information that would enable the Council to set its Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2020/21 (1) advising that the Council's 30 year business plan for HRA had been updated to reflect the four year 5% rental rises until 2021/22, and thereafter it was assumed that the average annual rent rise would be 3% reflecting the UK Government's long-term Consumer Price Index inflation target of 2% plus an additional 1%; (2) indicating that approximately 21,414 Council tenants in North Lanarkshire (59%) were in receipt of Housing Benefit or the housing cost element of Universal Credit; (3) detailing, within the report and the appendices to the report, information regarding the HRA revenue estimates; cost pressures; base budget savings and the HRA business plan, and (4) intimating, with regard to the use of surplus balances (a) that, as part of its long-term HRA budgetary strategy, the Council's Policy was to set aside a core reserve of £1.450m, which represented approximately 1% of the HRA budget; (b) that, in addition, the HRA reserve balances included a Change Management/Risks and Uncertainty reserve of £3.235m, and, should there be no further call on this reserve, it would be considered as part of the 2020/21 budget setting process, and (c) that this excluded the surplus projected in the current financial year which totalled £0.121m at Period 7.

Decided:

- (1) that the base budget adjustments detailed within Appendix 1 to the report be noted;
- (2) that the key business planning assumptions detailed at Appendix 2 to the report be noted;
- (3) that the updated 30-year financial model summarised at Appendix 3 to the report be noted;
- (4) that the base budget savings highlighted within Appendix 4 to the report be noted;
- (5) that the allocation of HRA surplus balances as highlighted within paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5 of the report be approved;
- (6) that the financial assumptions contained within the report be reviewed at the North Lanarkshire Council meeting on 19 December 2019 to allow the HRA Revenue Estimates 2020/21 to be approved, and
- (7) that the report be otherwise noted.

REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORTS

(1) HRA REVENUE MONITORING REPORT - PERIOD 7 - 1 APRIL TO 11 OCTOBER 2019

10. There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Enterprise and Communities) (1) providing a summary of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) financial performance for the period from 1 April to 11 October 2019 (Period 7); (2) illustrating the projected outturn as at 31 March 2020, with major outturn variances highlighted and explained in accordance with the Council's approved Financial Regulations, and (3) advising that the Service currently anticipated (a) a surplus of £0.121m, and (b) that £1,867m of savings would be delivered by the financial year-end.

Decided: that the financial position of the HRA budget 2019/20 be noted.

(2) ENTERPRISE AND COMMUNITIES - REVENUE MONITORING (NON TRADING)

11. There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Enterprise and Communities) (1) highlighting the financial performance of the Enterprise and Communities revenue budget for the period from 1 April to 11 October 2019 (Period 7); (2) illustrating the projected outturn as at 31 March 2020, with major outturn variances highlighted and explained as per the Council's approved Financial Regulations, and (3) advising (a) that the Enterprise and Communities' budget was forecasting a year-end balanced budget position based on performance to Period 7, and (b) that the Service had identified a number of financial pressures across each division which were being fully offset by planned management action, with further information highlighted within the appendices to the report.

Decided: that the financial position of the 2019/20 Enterprise and Communities revenue budget be noted.

Councillors Douglas and Alan Valentine, prior to the consideration of the following item of business, having declared an interest by virtue of their membership of TCA Limited, took no part in the consideration thereof.

(3) ENTERPRISE AND COMMUNITIES – TRADING REPORT

12. There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Enterprise and Communities) (1) providing a summary of the Council's Trading Account financial performance for the period from 1 April to 11 October 2019 (Period 7); (2) illustrating the projected outturn, as at 31 March 2020, with major outturn variances highlighted and explained as per the Council's approved Financial Regulations, and (3) advising that the Council's Trading Account was projected to achieve the budgeted surplus of £0.626m for 2019/20 based on performance to Period 7.

Decided: that the financial position of the 2019/20 Enterprise and Communities' Trading Account Budget be noted.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING REPORT

(1) HRA MONITORING REPORT – 1 APRIL TO 11 OCTOBER 2019

13. There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Enterprise and Communities) (1) reviewing progress towards the agreed spending plans within the 2019/20 HRA Capital Programmes, and the
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projected spend on the New Build Programme and Council Buy Back Schemes; (2) indicating that the projected spend on the (a) New Build Programme currently totalled £19.420m which was funded by Prudential Borrowing and Scottish Government Grant, and (b) Buy Back Schemes currently totalled £12.5m, jointly between the Empty Homes Purchase Scheme and the Open Market Purchase Scheme, which was funded by Prudential Borrowing and Scottish Government Grant, and (3) setting out, within the report, (a) a number of budget virements, and (b) re-profiling of the HRA Capital Programme, which reflected programme slippage and realigned resources to projects progressing more quickly than others.

Decided:

- (1) that the financial position of the 2019/20 HRA Capital Programmes be noted;
- (2) that the virement requests and re-profiling of the HRA Capital Programme as set out within the report be approved, and
- (3) that the report be otherwise noted.

(2) ENTERPRISE AND COMMUNITIES - CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT

14. There was submitted a report by the Executive Director (Enterprise and Communities) (1) highlighting the financial performance of the Enterprise and Communities Capital Programme for the period from 1 April to 11 October 2019 (Period 7); (2) advising that the Service had a total Capital Budget of £72.251m across all the work streams of the Composite Capital Programme, Enterprise Projects, Schools and Centres Modernisation and Early Years Expansion, and (3) intimating that the Service was forecasting a break-even position.

Decided: that the financial position of the 2019/20 Enterprise and Communities Capital Programme be noted.

CONTRACT AWARD - STAIRWELL CLEANING (CLOSE CLEANING) CONTRACT 2020-2023

15. With reference to paragraph 15 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 22 May 2019 when *inter alia* it had been agreed (1) that a competitive tendering exercise for the Close Cleaning Service be undertaken, and (2) that a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee providing details on the criteria and scope within the contract, and on the outcome of the tendering exercise, there was submitted a report by the Head of Housing Solutions (a) reporting on the outcome of the tendering process for the Stairwell Cleaning (Close Cleaning) Contract 2020-2023; (b) advising that, after checking, the most economically advantageous tender for the Stairwell Cleaning (Close Cleaning) Contract 2020-2023 was that submitted by CAS Contract Cleaning Limited, and (c) proposing that the tender submitted by CAS Contract Cleaning Limited, up to the maximum value of £1,612,390 for the maximum period of the contract, be accepted for a period of three years, with an option to extend for a further period of one year at the sole discretion of the Council.

Decided:

- (1) that the tender submitted by CAS Contract Cleaning Limited, up to the maximum value of £1,612,390 for the maximum period of the contract, for the Stairwell Cleaning (Close Cleaning) Contract 2020-2023, be accepted for a period of three years, with an option to extend for a further period of one year, at the sole discretion of the Council, and
- (2) that the report be otherwise noted.

APPROVAL TO COMMENCE PROCUREMENT - LEAD MAINS REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME, AND LOW RISE ELECTRICAL REPLACEMENT WORK

16. There was submitted a report by the Head of Business (Housing Property and Projects) (1) seeking approval to commence new procurement exercises for the Lead Mains Replacement Programme and Low Rise Electrical Replacement Work, and to utilise the call-off mechanism via the Scottish Procurement Alliance (SPA) Framework and (2) proposing (a) that the Lead Mains Replacement Contract and the Contract for Low Rise Electrical Replacement Works be procured to realign with future contracts as required; (b) that for both contracts, the procurement vehicle be secured via the Official Journal of the European Union, and that additional term contracts be put in place to ensure the delivery of the 2020/2021 HRA Capital Programme, and (c) that the SPA Framework be used to allow call-offs to be utilised, and to assist with the delivery of the fire detection compliance programme as required, aligning with the deadline of February 2021.

Decided:

- (1) that the commencement of new procurement exercises as detailed within the report be approved;
- (2) that the use of the SPA Framework for future contract awards (call-off procedures) be approved, and
- (3) that the report be otherwise noted.

NEW BUILD PROGRAMME - PROCUREMENT

17. With reference to (1) paragraph 11 of the Minute of the meeting of the former Enterprise and Housing Committee held on 14 November 2018, and (2) paragraph 10 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee held on 11 September 2019, there was submitted a report by the Head of Planning and Regeneration detailing the current procurement activity relating to the New Build Programme (a) seeking approval (A) to commence the procurement of the first phase of the regeneration masterplan for Gowkthrapple, Wishaw, using Hub South West, and (B) to award contracts for the developments at Roberts Street, Wishaw and Lindsaybeg Road, Chryston (b) outlining the background to the various procurement routes which were being used to help to ensure delivery of 5,000 new homes by 2035; (c) advising (A) that Hub South West was a public private partnership that enabled cost efficient design in construction of facilities within the South West Scotland Hub Territory, and (B) that the Council was a named participant contracting authority within the territory and had entered into a Shareholder's Agreement; (d) proposing (A) that the Council obtain tender costs utilising the Hub South West Construction Framework for the New Build Social Housing Site for the first stage of the regeneration master plan for the Gowkrapple Estate, Wishaw, and (B) that, should the final price represent Best Value, subject to finalisation of a sourcing methodology, including an options appraisal, the contract would be progressed in accordance with contract standing orders; (e) intimating (A) that, following approval of the feasibility costs obtained for the construction of new build housing at Caledonian Avenue and Community Road, Bellshill to CCG (Scotland) Limited, a final combined tender price had been agreed to allow the contract award, although at present the contract award was on hold due to difficulties in obtaining technical approval from Scottish Water to connect to its combined foul and surface water sewer at Community Road; (B) that, in order to progress the programme, the contract for Caledonian Avenue was being progressed, and Community Road would be progressed when an economically viable solution could be found for the sewer connection, and (C) that work was being progressed to agree final tender prices for the projects at Bon Accord, Shotts; Berwick Street, Coatbridge and Laburnum Road, Viewpark, which were being procured through the SPA Framework, although there were difficulties in obtaining technical approval from Scottish Water relating to the foul and surface water sewer, and (f) indicating that procurement activity had been progressed utilising the SPA Housing Construction Framework, and feasibility costs had been obtained for (A) the former Belhaven House, Roberts Street, Wishaw, from Hadden Group, for 16 units in the sum of £2.875m

including a 10% contingency allowance, and (B) the former Chilterns House at Lindsaybeg Road, Chryston from Hadden Group, for 22 units in the sum of £3.748m including a 10% contingency allowance.

Decided:

- (1) that the commencement of procurement activity with the Hub South West to deliver new build housing at the site of the first phase of the regeneration masterplan for the Gowkthrapple Estate, Wishaw be approved, and that the costs be subject to a further report to a future meeting of the Committee;
- (2) that the current difficulties being experienced in progressing planned developments at Caledonian Avenue and Community Road, Bellshill; Berwick Street, Coatbridge, Bon Accord Crescent, Shotts and Laburnum Road, Viewpark, and the action being taken to address those issues, be noted;
- (3) that the award of call-off contracts, in line with the Scottish Procurement Alliance (SPA) framework conditions, for the construction of new build housing at the former Belhaven House, Roberts Street, Wishaw to Hadden Group up to the value of £2.875m, including a 10% contingency allowance, be approved;
- (4) that the award of call-off contracts, in line with the SPA framework conditions, for the construction of new build housing at the former Chiltern's House, Lindsaybeg Road, Chryston to the Hadden Group up to the value of £3.748m including a 10% contingency allowance, be approved, and
- (5) that the report be otherwise noted.

Councillor Kelly, prior to the consideration of the following item of business, and having declared an interest by virtue of a family member's employment, took no part in the consideration thereof.

MEASURED TERM CONTRACTS: CONTRACT UPDATE REPORT, NON-HOUSING PROPERTIES

18. There was submitted a report by the Head of Business (Housing Property and Projects) providing an update on a number of Measured Term Contracts utilised by Housing Property and Projects in relation to the Council's non-housing property portfolio (1) advising of the level of spend on contracts that had expired, or were about to expire, and of the interim measures which had been put in place prior to these contracts being retendered (2) indicating that the Council operated a number of measured term contracts which allowed for the effective delivery of a repairs and maintenance service to the non-housing/corporate buildings; (3) intimating that the Council had procured various specific works associated with the non-housing property portfolio via Measured Term Contracts, which was funded from the Central Repairs Account, as well as capital and individual client services' revenue budgets; (4) detailing, within the report, the interim arrangements which had been put in place to manage the contracts for air conditioning; electric heating, flat roofing; replacement/maintenance of windows and floor coverings, and (5) setting out, within the report, the financial position of the various contracts.

Decided:

- (1) that the interim arrangements which had been put in place to manage the contracts detailed within the report be approved;
 - (2) that the financial position of the various contracts be noted;
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- (3) that the proposals to re-tender specific contracts in due course be noted, and
- (4) that the report be otherwise noted.

CONTRACTS AWARDED BELOW COMMITTEE APPROVAL THRESHOLD

19. There was submitted a report by the Head of Asset and Procurement Solutions intimating that the contracts, highlighted within Appendix 1 to the report, had been accepted by him in accordance with the General Contract Standing Orders during the period from 1 July to 30 September 2019.

Decided:

- (1) that the contracts accepted by the Head of Asset and Procurement Solutions in the reporting period from 1 July to 30 September 2019 be noted, and
- (2) that the report be otherwise noted.