

Agenda Item	3
Report No	HP/01/20

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Housing and Property Committee

Date: 29 January 2020

Report Title: Role and Remit of the Housing and Property Committee

Report By: Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 In December 2019 the Council approved the establishment of a new strategic committee structure and associated changes to the Scheme of Delegation. This is the first meeting of the newly established Housing and Property Committee and the following report details the role and remit of the committee for Members' consideration.
- 1.2 Whilst this report sets out what each committee will consider as standard, the first meetings of the new committees will be slightly different and are primarily establishing meetings: considering and agreeing the membership, roles and remit of each Committee and its sub-committee structure. In addition, each committee will consider items that require member decisions that cannot wait until the next cycle of meetings including policy development and organisational development. The full remit of the committees, including scrutiny of budgets, service plans and performance will come forward once the new organisational structure has come fully into effect from April 2020.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the following report.

3. Implications

- 3.1 There are no resource, legal, community, climate, risk or Gaelic implications arising from this report.

4. Summary

4.1 The following list summarises the areas that every Strategic Committee will consider as a matter of course at each committee cycle:

- Budget monitoring and scrutiny
- Service performance/quarterly reporting and statutory reporting requirements
- Review of external audits and inspections
- Policy Development and Service Planning
- Specific committee functions as set out in the Scheme of Delegation
- Responses to external consultations
- Responses to Legislative/Regulatory changes

5. Budget Monitoring and Scrutiny

5.1 As was the case previously, one of the key roles of the Strategic Committees will be to monitor the budgets for the Council services that fall under their remit. In the case of this committee, this will comprise the Housing and Property Service revenue budget; approving HRA Estimates and HRA Capital; HRA revenue budgets and associated rents and service charges; and the estates capital budget. The revenue budgets for the new Services are in the process of being established under the 8 Executive Chief Officers and will come into effect at the beginning of the 2020/21 financial year. Quarter 1 reporting will come to the Housing and Property Committee for consideration in August 2020. Quarter 3 & 4 monitoring of the 2019/20 Service revenue budgets will be reported to the Resources Committee.

5.2 Housing Revenue Account estimates for 2020/21 together with recommendations on the level of increase to be applied to Council house rents, other rents and service charges will come forward for Committee consideration at the first meeting of the Committee in each calendar year. The Committee will make recommendations to Council for formal approval.

6. Scrutiny of Performance

6.1 Another critical role of Strategic Committees is to scrutinise performance. Every Committee will have a number of common measures of performance that will come to each committee cycle. These are: staff absence; payment of invoices; complaints handling and Freedom of Information Requests (FOI). In addition, each Service will report their Service Plan performance which will include Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs); national benchmarking data; Corporate Plan measures and service-specific performance measures relevant to their functional remits. The Housing and Property Service Plan will come to Committee for approval in April 2020.

6.2 The Committee will also have the opportunity to consider on an ad hoc basis all external audits and inspections relevant to its remit and to monitor progress against the implementation of any recommendations arising.

6.3 There is also a tenant representative appointed to the committee.

7. Specific committee functions as set out in the Scheme of Delegation

7.1 The Scheme of Delegation was approved by the Council in December 2019. This set out the specific remit for the Housing and Property Committee split into two categories: Housing Services; and Property & Facilities Management Services. The latter reflects the Council's decision to move to a corporate landlord model for the management of all of the Council's property assets.

7.2 Housing Services:

To make decisions relating to the functions of the Council in delivering services relating to the following:

- Determining Local Housing Strategy.
- Approving Housing Management, Homelessness and Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policies.
- Approving HRA Estimates and HRA Capital and Revenue budgets and associated rents and service charges (excluding garages which are determined at Local Committee).

7.3 Property & Facilities Management Services

To set service standards and approve policy and overall priorities for the delivery of Housing & Property Service functions to comply with the Council's legal, regulatory and financial responsibilities. To make decisions relating to the functions of the Council in delivering services relating to the following:

- Corporate Landlord including property management & maintenance, energy management, quantity surveying, facilities management, catering &, cleaning, Engineering Services.
- PPP Contract Management, school hostels, countryside facilities
- Capital design and delivery, estates strategy & capital planning, corporate property asset management.
- To approve the distribution of operational budgets to Local Committees, scrutinise expenditure against local budgets and agree corrective action to ensure a balanced Service budget. To consider changes to local service delivery arrangements proposed by Local Committees where these would have an impact on more than one Local Committee area.
- To approve terms and conditions for the acquisition, disposal or lease of land and property and to monitor the status of building projects appearing in the capital works and maintenance programmes.
- To agree and monitor the project management arrangements for Public Private Partnership schemes relating to building construction or maintenance programmes and the Service's role as Client and Principal Designer.
- To monitor the purchase of fuels and energy (and agree such contracts), approve and maintain competed framework arrangements for minor and major works contracts and decide on grants of national significance which relate to the Service's responsibilities.

8. Sub Committees and Working Groups

- 8.1 Members of the Housing and Property Committee may nominate up to 3 Members to the Joint Wellbeing Sub-Committee, which is also made up of Members from the Education Committee, the Communities and Places Committee and the Health, Wellbeing and Social Care Committee. Membership will be agreed at Council.
- 8.2 As agreed at Council in December 2019, any formal working groups or boards that report to Strategic Committees or to the Council must be established on the basis of political balance and have an agreed purpose, remit, and terms of reference as well as a proposed duration. In addition to submitting minutes to the parent committee, all formal sub groups must submit an annual report to Council.

9. Amendments to the role and remit of Strategic Committees

As the Strategic Committees are newly established, there will be an opportunity to submit changes to Council's Scheme of Delegation to Council in March 2020 and also in June 2020, to provide Members and officers time to reflect on the operation of the new Committees and make any adjustments deemed appropriate.

Designation: Executive Chief Officer Performance and Governance

Date: 16 January 2020

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