



**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD IN MAYFIELD CENTRE, ST. NINIANS,
ON 18th OCTOBER 2023 AT 10.00am**

Present:

William Derrick
Anna Johnston
Alexander Wallace
Hugh McClung
Sarah-Jane Dunbar
Margaretanne Browne

Apologies:

Moir Robertson
Mags Hughes
Robert Cairney

Non-attendance:

Duncan Faichney

In attendance:

Luke Scrivens (Independent Tenant Participation Officer)
Simon Bain (Stirling Council)
Coreen McNeil (Stirling Council)

William thanked everyone for attending and welcomed Simon and Coreen to today's meeting to discuss plans for a project at 1 Johnston Avenue, Cornton.

Simon presented a paper (undernoted) outlining the plans for the proposed project.

- It is proposed to convert 11 flats at 1 Johnston Avenue for exclusive use as homeless temporary accommodation providing a mix of 10 self-contained and shared flats for single people and couples.
- This block currently consists of a mixture of studio, 1 and 2 bedroom flats. 5 of the flats have been used as temporary accommodation for some years, with 6 permanent council tenancies. There are no privately owned properties within the block. There are currently 12 dispersed temporary accommodation properties in Cornton (not including 1 Johnston Avenue).
- Despite a small reduction in homeless presentations during the last three years, there is a continuing high demand for temporary accommodation with 40-45 new households per

month assessed as homeless. This is mainly from single person households who remain the most common household type presenting, comprising 69% of all homeless applicants.

- This proposal will maximise the temporary accommodation options available to better enable Stirling Council to meet its statutory obligations within the homelessness legislation and to improve the housing, health and wellbeing needs for people living in temporary accommodation. Not proceeding with this proposal will place the ability to meet these legal duties at risk.
- In addition, the ongoing risk is that the financial costs of delivering temporary accommodation services for more households will continue to increase and has the potential to place the Council at risk of budget overspend. The provision of services for homeless households is funded from the General Fund, not the Housing Revenue Account.
- Since the beginning of 2022, on average 31 households have stayed in rapid access accommodation (this is temporary accommodation with shared facilities and on site staff support) every night in Stirling. This type of accommodation is comparatively expensive at an average cost of £63 per night person. In 2022/23, Stirling Council spent £714,859 in the provision of rapid access accommodation. However, £186,576 is reclaimed annually from Housing Benefit resulting in a net cost of £528,283.
- It is anticipated this proposal will achieve an overall recurring annual saving to the General Fund of £139,000 due to reducing the provision of rapid access accommodation spaces. It is projected these savings will be achieved from 2024/25.
- Re-purposing this existing council owned building will help both meet the demand from single people highlighted above and reduce the number of homeless households that reside in rapid access accommodation and therefore reduces the risk of the Council failing to achieve a key Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan aim of ending the use of rapid access accommodation for homeless households.
- To ensure this accommodation is appropriately maintained, supervised and any risk of anti-social behaviour is mitigated, it is proposed there is 24 hour on-site staff presence working from the ground floor studio flat which will be converted to a staff office, providing housing management support Monday – Friday (during office hours), with an external security contractor providing overnight and weekend cover as per operational practice at other temporary accommodation services where this model has proven to be very effective. CCTV will also be installed which will be monitored 24 hours. This will provide security to occupants, neighbouring residents and ensure occupants adhere to occupancy agreement responsibilities.
- If this proposal is taken forward, Officers will meet with the 6 council tenants living in the block to explain the interest in using this building for temporary accommodation. Based on informal feedback from some tenants, it is anticipated that most, if not all, tenants would be willing to move to alternative accommodation. 2 of the 6 tenants have active housing

applications to be re-homed. Officers would not ask any tenant to move against their wishes and will provide support in order that these households can be rehoused quickly in alternative accommodation of their choosing. Each tenant will complete a housing application form. Regardless of circumstances all households will receive points which will put all tenants at the top of the Strategic Housing List.

- The Housing Service will also undertake consultation with neighbouring residents regarding this proposal and the Community Council.
- In order to further support the rehoming of tenants, it is proposed to provide new floor and window coverings, decoration of the new home to same standard as the old property and assistance with packing and moving furnishings and personal belongings. The estimated cost of £14,700 will be funded from the temporary accommodation General Fund budget.
- Given the significant pressures and challenges in respect of the provision of rapid access temporary accommodation, it is recommended to progress this proposal as soon as possible. The target go live date would be April 2024, but this will be dependent on suitable alternative housing being identified for the current tenants to move to.

Simon indicated that he and Coreen will be meeting with groups in Cornton to gather local views and opinions on the proposal.

William thanked Simon and Coreen for their input to today's meeting.

Minutes of last meeting:

Minutes of meeting held on 20th September 2023 had been circulated and were approved by Alex, seconded by Hugh.

Business arising:

Page 2 – Meeting with Indigo House Group – This should be on the agenda for the next meeting of Housing Advisory Group.

Page 3 – Garden Maintenance Scheme – Hugh had e-mailed Stephen Clark to ask how people apply to be part of the Garden Maintenance Scheme. Apparently there is a deadline for when people can apply and Hugh wishes to query if it would be possible for Council to hold on to applications until they can be processed.

Page 4 – Garden Competition – Anna has checked with other STA members and with local communities and has found no evidence of advertising having been put in place re. the Garden Competition.

Chair's Report:

1. William has raised concerns about a proposal to remove staff from reception at Allan Water House. However, Simon Bain has assured William that reception desk will continue to be staffed.
2. William and Anna had been invited by Steven McCabe to complete a "fictional" housing application online form. This was successful and will be retested when the next step is ready.
3. William had been called by Tony Kelly (TPAS) concerning William's recent non-attendance at some TPAS Board meetings. This is obviously due to health reasons and Tony advised William that he'd be placed on leave of absence in the meantime.

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4. Meet & Greet Meetings – It was agreed that the Meet & Greet meeting in November will be held in Victoria Halls, Dunblane, on 16th November 2023 from 11.00am to 1.00pm.

Secretary's Report:

1. Anna continues to forward e-mails she receives from TPAS etc. to all STA members.
2. She also maintains STA's Facebook page.
3. Anna will look into possible venues for STA Christmas meeting and lunch in December.

Treasurer's Report:

£9,774.69.

Independent TP Officer's Report:

1. Training Session will be held on 8th November at Mayfield Centre. 8 members have confirmed their attendance.
2. Luke is hoping to bring forward the TP Strategy – where we were, what has or has not been done since.
3. Tenants Handbook is being updated and will be posted on the Housing Online system.
4. Open Door issue should be available soon and will include the Rent Consultation Strategy.

There being no further business William closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

Date of next meeting:

16th November 2023 (Meet & Greet Meeting – possibly in Victoria Halls, Dunblane).