

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET4 March 2021Report by Director of EnvironmentAUTHORISATION TO SIGN LEASES ON BEHALF OF THE COUNCIL
FOR THE LET OF HOUSES**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for the amendment of the Scheme of Delegated Functions in relation to approving additional officers to sign tenancy agreements to permit the council to let homes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet approve the addition of the following officers to the list of those already authorised to sign tenancy agreements for the let of houses:

- Repairs Delivery Manager
- Assistant Repairs Delivery Manager
- Lead Officer (Strategy Improvement & Support)
- Lead Officer (Property & Capital)

BACKGROUND AND REPORT

3. The tenancy agreement in place for all council tenancies is a legally binding document detailing the rights and responsibilities of both social landlord and tenant as defined by Scottish legislation. As such, it must be signed by an authorised officer of the Council as detailed in the Scheme of Delegated Functions.

4. The existing Scheme of Delegated Functions was updated in October 2020 to reflect principally the changes in job functions and titles as a result of the ongoing re structure of Housing Services.

5. As a result the following officers were then approved to sign leases:

- Senior Housing Manager
- Housing Services Manager (Service Delivery)
- Housing Services Manager (Property & Strategy)
- Lead Officer (Housing Options & Support)
- Lead Officer (Tenancy & Care)

6. The attendance of officers from Housing Services at any Council building is determined by social distancing requirements and the provision of essential services. However, the continuing restrictions imposed by COVID 19 has made it apparent that to have one of the existing authorised officers present within the office when a lease is being signed has become more difficult to guarantee. To place them on the office rota solely in order for leases to be signed hinders the attendance of other officers who deliver essential services due to social distancing and related maximum office staffing capacities.

7. To maximise the likelihood of having an authorised officer present it is proposed the additional posts be added as authorised signatories. All posts are senior supervisory posts within Housing Services.

8. Before leases are signed all allocations of council properties are approved by the Lead Officer (Housing Options & Support) and no officer should sign leases without ensuring this approval is in place. The proposed additional officers will be provided with the required training.

9. This proposed change is temporary and this authorisation will be removed for the additional officers once social distancing measures are reduced and office attendance increases.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

10. There are no financial costs associated with this proposal. However, any delay in the signing of tenancy agreements as a result of signatories not being present in the office has a financial implication for Housing Services by increasing rent loss as a result of empty homes.

CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

11. Advice has been sought from colleagues in Democratic Services in the development and submission of this report.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

12. There are no implications from these proposals in terms of staffing, property, legal, IT, State Aid, equalities and sustainability.

CONCLUSIONS

13. In times of restricted access to office premises both as a result of COVID 19 and perhaps changing work patterns in future it is necessary to ensure service delivery is maintained by ensuring authorised staff are available to carry out essential functions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

14. It is recommended that the Cabinet approve the addition of the following officers to the list of those already authorised to sign tenancy agreements for the let of houses:

- Repairs Delivery Manager
- Assistant Repairs Delivery Manager
- Lead Officer (Strategy Improvement & Support)
- Lead Officer (Property & Capital)

Director of Environment

Further information can be obtained from: Phil Daws, Head of Environment (Strategic Services) phil.daws@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk 0141 577 3186

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