

HOUSING COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Housing Committee held within the Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Wednesday 27th March, 1996.

Present: Councillor Andrew White (LAB), Councillor John McElhill (SNP), Councillor Mary Campbell (LAB), Councillor John Syme (LAB), Councillor Anthony Devine (LAB), Councillor Patricia Rice (LAB), Councillor William Kemp (IND), Councillor John Wailes (SNP), Councillor Craig McLaughlin (SNP – substituting for Councillor William Mackechnie), Councillor Duncan Mills (LAB) and Councillor Margaret McGregor (SNP).

Attending: Ian Leitch, Depute Chief Executive & Solicitor to the Council, David Campbell, Director of Housing Services and Mary Cullen, Head of Corporate Policy and Public Relations.

Apology for Absence: An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Geoffrey Calvert.

Councillor Andrew White in the Chair

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Housing Committee held on 31st January, 1996 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

TENANT PARTICIPATION

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of this Committee held on 31st January, 1996 (page 278 refers) there was submitted an update report by the Director of Housing Services regarding:- 1. Representation on the Housing Committee and 2. Meetings with Umbrella Groups.

After hearing the Director of Housing Services with respect to the matter of Representation on the Housing Committee, it was noted that Dumbarton District Housing Federation had requested that consideration of the recommendation that tenants' representatives should not attend Housing Committee meetings other than as members of the public and should not have voting rights be continued until the next meeting of the Committee. The Committee agreed that consideration of the matter be continued until the next meeting as requested.

After hearing the Director of Housing Services with regard to meetings with Umbrella Groups, it was noted (a) that an initial meeting had taken place with Dumbarton District Housing Federation, that further meetings would be held with the Housing Federation and that it was hoped that following these meetings recommendations would be submitted to the next or a future meeting of the Housing Committee for consideration and (b) that a meeting

had now been arranged with the Association of Clydebank Residents Groups and relevant recommendations would again be submitted to an appropriate meeting of the Housing Committee for consideration.

HOMELESSNESS

There was submitted a report by the Director of Housing Services detailing recommendations for resolving current differences between the approaches to homelessness within Dumbarton and Clydebank Districts.

It was agreed that the undernoted recommendations be approved subject to a further report on the matter being submitted to the Housing Committee for consideration in 6 months time:-

- (a) that the emphasis of the Council's policy will be to offer appropriate advice and assistance which may prevent homelessness.
- (b) as a target, all homeless applicants should receive a written decision on their application within 28 days of their application being submitted.
- (c) that the Council will attempt to reduce to an absolute minimum the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. In addition the length of stay in any temporary accommodation will be kept to a minimum.
- (d) that all applicants aged 16 to 18 will be accepted as vulnerable, by age, in terms of the homeless legislation.
- (e) that all applicants aged 60 or over will be accepted as vulnerable, by age, in terms of the homeless legislation.
- (f) that as soon as possible one offer of permanent accommodation will be made to applicants who are accepted as homeless, in priority need, but not intentionally homeless. Where practical the offer made will take into account the applicant's needs and circumstances.
- (g) that appeals against any homeless decisions will be considered by the Director of Housing Services or other senior housing officer nominated by the Director.

NOMINATION AGREEMENTS

There was submitted a report by the Director of Housing Services giving details of nomination agreements between the outgoing District Councils and various Housing Associations and recommending interim arrangements.

After hearing the Director of Housing Services it was agreed that the arrangements detailed in the report be continued between the new authority and the various housing providers until the situation can be more critically examined.

ADJUSTMENT TO HOUSE ALLOCATION POLICIES

There was submitted a report by the Director of Housing Services putting forward recommendations on adjustments to house allocation policies.

It was noted that decisions required to be taken by this authority and by Argyll & Bute Council regarding the future status of applicants from the area transferring to Argyll & Bute Council who are at present on the housing list for Dumbarton and Vale of Leven, and applicants from Dumbarton and Vale of Leven area who are on the list for the Helensburgh and Luss areas.

Following discussion it was agreed that on a transitional basis and subject to a reciprocal agreement being approved by Argyll & Bute Council, existing applicants from the Helensburgh and Luss areas be retained on the Housing List for Dumbarton and Vale of Leven areas for a temporary period until new policies are implemented.

POLICY ON HOUSING ISSUES

There was submitted a report by the Director of Housing Services on interim arrangements for housing policies.

After hearing the Director of Housing Services it was agreed that, for any issue where a policy decision is required but has not yet been taken by the new Council, the policy of the former authority for the area be applied until the issue can be considered by the Housing Committee of West Dunbartonshire Council.