

HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Housing, Environment & Economic Development Committee held in Meeting Room 3, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 3 March 2010 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Jim Bolland, Jim Brown, Geoff Calvert, Gail Casey, Jim Finn, William Hendrie, David McBride, Jim McElhill, Craig McLaughlin and William McLaughlin.

Attending: Elaine Melrose, Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development; Ronald Dinnie, Head of Land and Environment Services; Jim McAloon, Head of Housing and Regeneration Services; John McKerracher, Head of Property and Technical Services; Jeff Stobo, Manager of Strategy; Jim Pow, Manager of Finance, Housing, Environment and Economic Development Department; Margaret Caldwell, Manager of Housing Operations; Alasdair Gregor, Manager of Planning; Angus Bodie, Manager of Roads, Waste and Transport; William Gibson, Section Head (Estates); Janice Winder, Anti-social Behaviour and Community Safety Co-ordinator; Sally Michael, Principal Solicitor and Craig Stewart, Committee Officer, Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services.

Councillor William Hendrie in the Chair

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest in any of the items of business on the agenda.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee held on 6 January 2010 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

DUNBARTONSHIRE LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive presenting the final draft of the Dunbartonshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan (DLBAP) for approval.

The Committee agreed to approve the final draft of the Dunbartonshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

CONSULTATION ON THE WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development on the draft West Dunbartonshire Corporate Parenting Strategy and seeking the views of Members on the Strategy.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the final draft of the Corporate Parenting Strategy; and
- (2) to note that the Strategy would be submitted to Council for approval in March 2010.

EXTENSION OF FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT FOR THE SUPPLY OF TEMPORARY AGENCY STAFF (CRAFT)

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development seeking approval to extend the Council's contract with the current service providers until 30 April 2011.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to approve the extension of the existing contract for the supply of Temporary Agency Staff (Craft) for a period of 12 months until 30 April 2011.

DISPOSAL AND ACQUISITION OF GROUND AT WOODYARD ROAD, DUMBARTON

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development seeking approval for the disposal of 218 square metres or thereby of ground at Woodyard Road, Dumbarton to Mr. and Mrs. P. Doherty.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the proposed disposal of 218 square metres or thereby of ground at Woodyard Road, Dumbarton to Mr. and Mrs. Doherty which would be in exchange for 160 square metres or thereby of ground at Woodyard Road, Dumbarton being acquired from Mr. and Mrs. Doherty by the Council; and

- (2) that the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development be authorised to refer the proposed disposal and acquisition to the Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services to conclude these transactions subject to such legal conditions as are considered appropriate and completion of the appropriate title searches.

MILLBURN ROADS DEPOT, MAIN STREET, RENTON

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing an update on the current status of the Millburn Roads Depot and the proposed future use of this property.

After discussion and having heard the relevant officers in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed that the Millburn Roads Depot be leased to Complete Paving Requirements at the market rent of £20,000 p.a. on standard commercial lease terms as soon as practically possible.

Councillor Bollan, having failed to obtain a seconder for a proposed amendment, asked that his dissent be recorded in respect of this item.

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE PROPOSED SALE OF KIPPEN DAIRY SITE, MAIN STREET, ALEXANDRIA TO CORDALE HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development advising of progress on issues relating to the sale of the Kippen Dairy site to Cordale Housing Association Limited.

After discussion and having heard the relevant officers in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress to date; and
- (2) that the Kippen Dairy site, excluding the land not in ownership of the Council be sold to Cordale Housing Association Ltd. at the market value after detailed Planning consent for the residential development had been obtained.

IMPROVED RECYCLING SERVICES – PROGRESS REPORT

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development informing of the progress being made in preparing for the change from the current weekly residual waste and four weekly recycle/garden waste collection system to an alternate weekly waste collection system.

The Committee agreed to note the progress being made in preparation for the change to an alternate weekly waste collection system in the Dumbarton, Renton and Vale of Leven areas from 12 April 2010.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT (SCOTLAND) ACT 2009

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing an update on the tasks, phased timescales, identification of responsibilities and cost implications for implementation of the 'Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009' and highlighting in particular the cost and resource impact on local authorities.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the tasks, phased timescales, identification of the responsibilities and initial cost implications for implementation of the 'Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009' highlighting in particular the cost and resource impact on the Council;
- (2) that authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development to take the necessary measures to comply with the gradual implementation of the Act;
- (3) that authority be delegated to the Head of Finance to agree the appropriate financial arrangements with the Scottish Government; and
- (4) to note that an update report will be provided to a future meeting of the Committee.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COMMON HOUSING REGISTER 'HOMESEARCH'

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing an update on progress in the development of the Common Housing Register (CHR) in partnership with local Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

After discussion and having heard the Manager of Housing Operations in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress to date in the development of the CHR and the outline project plan; and
- (2) to note that a further report on specific issues for decision, including funding, would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

ALEXANDRIA MASTERPLAN: MITCHELL WAY MARKETING BRIEF

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development advising of the progress in implementing the Alexandria Town Centre Masterplan and specifically the marketing brief for the Mitchell Way site in Alexandria Town Centre.

After discussion and having heard the Head of Housing and Regeneration Services in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress in implementing the Alexandria Town Centre Masterplan and the opportunity to progress the Mitchell Way site;
- (2) that arrangements be made for an Open Day to be held in Alexandria to give as much information to interested parties and the public on this issue;
- (3) that, in view of (2) above, an invitation be extended to Members of the former Alexandria Regeneration Forum to a meeting to explore the Forum's future role in terms of the wider public consultation;
- (4) that the issue of owner occupiers should be addressed in the context of wider surplus stock issues; and
- (5) to note that a report on the outcomes of the site marketing activity would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration.

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING GRANT BUDGET AND SCHEME OF ASSISTANCE

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development seeking approval of the new Scheme of Assistance (SOA) which will replace the Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG) system that is currently in place, to intimate the offer of grant from the Scottish Government for PSHG for 2010/2011 and recommending how this funding should be allocated and prioritised.

After discussion and having heard the Manager of Planning in elaboration and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the content of the report, including the allocations indicated in the table in paragraph 3.4 of the report, with the exception that the maximum level of financial assistance that may be provided by the Council should be up to 100% and not 50% of the approved cost of the works as contained in the Scheme of Assistance document;
- (2) that a letter be sent to the appropriate Scottish Government Minister expressing the Committee's concerns in respect of the shortage in funding for Private Sector Housing Grants;
- (3) otherwise to approve the Scheme of Assistance document, with the change in the level of grant funding referred to at (1) above; and
- (4) that the Scheme be reviewed in 12 months time.

SURPLUS COUNCIL HOUSING STOCK: OWNERS

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development advising of options for private owners living within council housing stock designated as surplus to requirements and identifying wider issues relating to housing regeneration for consideration.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) in principle to the acquisition of privately owned properties within the surplus stock areas of North Mountblow and Bellsmyre and 5 privately owned houses in Mitchell Way, Alexandria as shown in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) that the undernoted terms and conditions of the purchase shall be agreed between the Council's Estates Section and the owners of the properties:
 - (a) that the Council will purchase the properties at North Mountblow, Clydebank, Bellsmyre, Dumbarton and Mitchell Way, Alexandria at the open market value with vacant possession;
 - (b) the Council will also make a disturbance payment to the owners;
 - (c) the Council shall pay the owners reasonable legal fees, expenses, VAT, together with Stamp Duty Land Tax and registration dues; and
 - (d) that at the date of settlement for each property vacant possession would be given to the Council;
- (3) that the demolition of housing stock will be as defined in the map shown in Appendix 2 to the report;
- (4) to the adjustment of the HRA capital programme to meet the costs associated with recommendations (1) and (2) above; and
- (5) that a report on progress of this activity would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration.

STOCK TRANSFER UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing an update and noting the progress of implementation of the stock transfer project.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development in answer to Members' questions and the Principal Solicitor In clarification of Standing Orders, Councillor C. McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor McElhill, moved:-

That the Committee agrees to note:-

- (1) the progress in establishing the Stock Transfer Project Team;
- (2) the establishment of the Stock Transfer Steering Group;
- (3) the progress in procuring a lead consultant for the stock transfer project; and
- (4) that a report on stock transfer strategy would be submitted to the Committee for consideration in May 2010.

As an amendment, Councillor Bollan, seconded by Councillor Calvert, moved:-

That the Committee recognises the serious flaws in the current stock transfer policy and agrees to hold a ballot of all stock transfer tenants in West Dunbartonshire within the next 3 months, asking the following question:-

"Do you wish to remain a Council tenant or transfer to a private landlord?"

On a vote being taken, 4 Members voted for the amendment and 6 for the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

It was also agreed that the minutes of Meetings of the Stock Transfer Steering Group would be sent to Members of the Committee for their information.

ADJOURNMENT

After hearing the Chair, Councillor Hendrie, the Committee agreed to adjourn for a short period.

The meeting reconvened at 12 noon with all Members listed in the Sederunt in attendance, with the exception of Councillor Casey.

REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS, 2009/10 AND 2010/11 – AN IMPROVING COUNCIL: BALLOCH CASTLE

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development advising of the outcomes of the work undertaken in respect of options appraisal for the future use of Balloch Castle.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development and the Head of Property and Technical Services in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report;
- (2) to note the lease arrangement between West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) as the tenant of the Castle and Glasgow City Council (GCC) as the landlord in terms of the obligation on W.D.C. to undertake essential upgrade and structural repair work as outlined in paragraph 3.5 of the report;
- (3) to note the indicative costs of earlier development work/options appraisal proposals as detailed in paragraphs 4.9 and 4.10 of the report but this in the context of funding restrictions, existing lease conditions and the limited remaining lease term; and to commission a firm update on the 1999 proposals to account for present economic conditions;
- (4) that an early meeting should take place between officers of WDC and GCC to discuss the current lease agreement and a way forward with respect particularly to upgrade and repairs obligations; and
- (5) that dependent upon the outcome of discussions with GCC, alternative uses for Balloch Castle may be practical subject to funding.

EXTERNAL VALIDATION OF CONTRACTOR PERFORMANCE IN THE PROVISION OF HOUSING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development advising of the outcome of the validation exercise relating to the performance of the in-house contractor, Housing DLO, since the start of the present contract on 18 June 2007.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development and the Head of Property and Technical Services in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the content of the report and of the appended Housing Repairs DLO External Validation Report.

LEISURE TRUST

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing information regarding the potential to establish a Leisure Trust in West Dunbartonshire, the implications of setting up such an organisation and potential financial benefits.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development and the Head of Land and Environment in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, Councillor Hendrie, seconded by Councillor C. McLaughlin, moved:-

That the Committee agrees:-

- (1) in principle, to a Leisure Trust model being developed in West Dunbartonshire Council as a mechanism for delivery of leisure and related services;
- (2) that authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development, in consultation with other departments, to develop detailed options for trust models in West Dunbartonshire; and
- (3) that a report outlining those options be brought to a meeting of the Committee for consideration by no later than October 2010.

As an amendment, Councillor Calvert, seconded by Councillor McBride, moved:-

That the Committee thank officers for the report but that no action be taken meantime in regard to this issue.

On a vote being taken, 3 Members voted for the amendment and 6 for the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

REVIEW OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development outlining progress with the integration of Halls and Community Learning and Development facilities and seeking agreement to proceed with a consultation exercise as part of shaping the size and provision of this service for the future.

After discussion and having heard the Head of Land and Environment Services in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, Councillor W. McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor C. McLaughlin, moved:-

That the Committee agrees:-

- (1) to support the review process as outlined in paragraph 10.2 of the report;
- (2) to involve representatives of the trades unions in the consultation exercise, without previous assumptions, on the rationalisation of the service with a further report including recommendations on the outcome of the consultation being presented to the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee in October 2010; and

- (3) to note that a report on the letting of facilities would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

As an amendment, Councillor Calvert, seconded by Councillor McBride, moved:-

That the Committee agrees:-

- (1) to support the review process as outlined in paragraph 10.2 of the report;
- (2) to involve representatives of the trades unions in the consultation exercise, without previous assumptions, on the rationalisation of the service with a further report including recommendations on the outcome of the consultation being presented to the Council in October 2010 and not the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee as recommended in the Executive Director's report; and
- (3) to note that a report on the letting of facilities would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

On a vote being taken, 3 Members voted for the amendment and 6 for the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

Otherwise, it was also agreed:-

- (1) that the appendix to the report be revised to include more comprehensive and detailed information, including staffing costs, and that this updated information be sent to Members of the Committee as soon as possible; and
- (2) that it would be helpful, in future, for the Committee report to include individual reports on each of the community facilities providing the information referred to at (1) above.

FUTURE PROVISION OF CCTV IN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development advising of the issues impacting on the performance and viability of the CCTV Trust and to directly operate local CCTV operations in the short term, due to urgent circumstances and in order to ensure continuity of service as far as possible.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development and the Anti-social Behaviour and Community Safety Co-ordinator in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) given the urgency of the situation, to approve the principle of taking CCTV monitoring in-house from 1 May 2010;

- (2) that the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development be instructed to commence immediate negotiations with the CCTV Trust in relation to West Dunbartonshire Council and public space cameras and to progress the transfer of operations from 1 May 2010 onwards;
- (3) to re-affirm the vision of making progress towards an integrated monitoring station in the longer term, possibly developed as a shared service;
- (4) that the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development ensures that a new CCTV Strategy and Implementation plan for the medium/longer term be developed through the Strategic Community Safety Partnership and reported back to the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee by December 2010; and
- (5) that a report be prepared for consideration at a future meeting of the Strategic Community Safety Partnership which would deal with the concerns expressed by Members in relation to the effectiveness of CCTV monitoring as compared to improved and more effective street lighting.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2009/2010 BUDGETARY CONTROL STATEMENT TO 15 JANUARY 2010 (PERIOD 9)

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing an update on the financial performance of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to the period ended 15 January 2010.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2009/2010 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 15 JANUARY 2010 (PERIOD 9)

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development advising on the progress of the HRA Capital Programme 2009/2010.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2009/2010 TO 15 JANUARY 2010 (PERIOD 9)

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing an update on the financial performance of the Housing, Environmental and Economic Development Department to 15 January 2010 (Period 9).

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

The meeting closed at 1.30 p.m.