

HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Housing, Environment & Economic Development Committee held in the Council Chambers, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 3 June 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Jim Brown, Geoff Calvert, Gail Casey, William Hendrie, David McBride, Jim McElhill and Craig 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; Jeff Stobo, Manager of Strategy; Jim Pow, Manager of Finance, Housing, Environment and Economic Development Department; Margaret Caldwell, Manager of Housing Operations; William Gibson, Section Head (Estates); Stephen McGonagle, Manager of Repairs and Maintenance; Kevin Neeson, Manager of Development Services; Michael Gill, Section Head, Skillseekers Section; Gillian Scholes, Section Head of Economic Development; Sally Michael, Principal Solicitor and Nuala Borthwick, Committee Officer, Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Jim Bolla, Jim Finn and William McLaughlin.

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 MEETINGS

The Minutes of Meetings of the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee held on 8 April 2009 (Ordinary) and 29 April 2009 (Special) were submitted and approved as a correct record.

With reference to the item contained in the Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 29 April 2009, entitled 'Clydebank Leisure Centre Development and Sale of the Play Drome Site' (Pages 1927/1928 refer), after hearing the Head of Housing and Regeneration Services in answer to Members' questions, the Committee noted that a number of enquiries had been received in relation to the existing Play Drome site.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL'S TOURISM STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN (2009-2012)

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 8 April 2009 (Page 1900 refers), a report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development:-

- (a) providing some additional information to the Committee following the presentation of a report on the Tourism Strategy and Action Plan to the meeting on 8 April 2009; and
- (b) seeking approval of the Strategy and Action Plan and requesting that the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development be authorised, in conjunction with the Executive Director of Corporate Services, to secure the appropriate funding from within existing revenue budgets.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to acknowledge the work of the partner agencies in contributing to the development of the Tourism and Hospitality Strategy and Action Plan;
- (2) to approve the Tourism and Hospitality Strategy and Action Plan (2009-2012); and
- (3) that authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development, in consultation with the Executive Director of Corporate Services, to secure £30,000 from existing revenue budgets of the Council to fund the proposed activities identified in the Action Plan in the first year.

HOUSING, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT - PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing information on the performance of services within the Housing, Environmental and Economic Development Department.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

SERVICE PLAN 2009 - 2013

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development seeking approval of the Housing, Environmental and Economic Development Department's Service Plan 2009 – 2013.

A revised copy of Appendix 2 to the report was circulated to Members at this point in the proceedings.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development, the Committee agreed to approve the Housing, Environmental and Economic Development Service Plan 2009 - 2013.

REGENERATION AREAS: PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF VACANT WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL HOUSING IN BELLSMYRE

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development seeking approval to take the necessary action to dispose of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) properties detailed in the report to Bellsmyre Housing Association Ltd. to facilitate regeneration of the area.

The Committee agreed to transfer the surplus properties identified at paragraph 2.1 of the report, when vacant, to Bellsmyre Housing Association Limited, subject to the following conditions:-

- (1) the Council's HRA debt in respect of the properties be written off by the UK Treasury or failing this, acquisition costs be met by the Scottish Government;
- (2) Bellsmyre Housing Association Ltd be responsible for re-housing any remaining council tenants prior to the transfer;
- (3) Bellsmyre Housing Association Ltd will as soon as reasonably possible, demolish these properties with a view to clearing the sites for development as agreed through the Bellsmyre Regeneration Group;
- (4) the purchaser be responsible for meeting the Council's legal and Estates fees expenses and outlays together with Stamp and Registration dues and any associated VAT; and
- (5) any disposal shall require the consent of Scottish Ministers;

It was also agreed:-

- (a) that the Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services be authorised to conclude the transactions subject to such legal conditions that are considered appropriate; and
- (b) that a Briefing Note be issued to all Elected Members on the issue of debt write off and that a report on the issue of debt write off be submitted to a future meeting of Council.

REGENERATION AREAS: PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF VACANT COUNCIL OWNED LAND AT TURNBERRY PLACE, CASTLEHILL

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development seeking approval to dispose of a site at Turnberry Place, Castlehill to a housing association to help facilitate future regeneration proposals for the area.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) that the site at Turnberry Place, Castlehill, as shown in Appendix 1 to the report, be transferred to either Cube Housing Association Ltd or Dunbritton Housing Association Ltd, subject to the following conditions:-
 - (a) the disposal shall be at nil consideration if the Council's HRA debt in respect of the demolished housing stock which formerly stood on the site is written off by the Treasury;
 - (b) if the Council's debt is not met by the UK Treasury, a valuation shall be agreed with the purchasers which is no less than the Council's outstanding debt of £168,000;
 - (c) the decision on the acquiring housing association shall be delegated to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development, in consultation with the Castlehill/Westcliff Regeneration Group and the Scottish Government's Housing Investment Division;
 - (d) the acquiring housing association will, as soon as reasonably possible, commence to build new affordable housing on the site, primarily to meet the needs of people affected by the demolition proposals for the regeneration area;
 - (e) the purchaser shall be responsible for meeting the Council's legal and Estates fees, expenses and outlays together with Stamp and Registration dues and any associated VAT; and
 - (f) any disposal should require the consent of Scottish Ministers; and
- (2) that the Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services be authorised to conclude the transaction subject to such legal conditions that are considered appropriate; and
- (3) that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee to establish the links between the Turnberry Place site and surrounding/neighbouring streets and the wider regeneration of Castlehill following completion of the masterplan.

PROPOSED TRANSFER OF 1, 3 AND 5 MILLER ROAD, HALDANE

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development seeking approval to take the necessary action to dispose of three Housing Revenue Account (HRA) tenement properties at 1, 3 and 5 Miller Road, Haldane to Cube Housing Association Ltd. to facilitate their demolition and the regeneration of the area.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) that the properties at 1, 3 and 5 Miller Road, Haldane be declared surplus to requirements; and
- (2) that the properties be transferred, when vacant, to Cube Housing Association at nil value or at a value which will meet the current debt owed on the properties, subject to the following conditions:-
 - (a) Cube Housing Association shall re-house all residents of 1, 3 and 5 Miller Road who wish to be housed in their new developments being built in Haldane;
 - (b) Cube Housing Association shall buy out the one private owner;
 - (c) Cube Housing Association will as soon as reasonably possible, demolish the properties with a view to clearing the sites for development as agreed through the Haldane Regeneration Group;
 - (d) the Treasury shall agree to write off any HRA debt on the properties, estimated at £118,796, or failing this, acquisition costs will be met by the Scottish Government;
 - (e) the purchaser shall be responsible for meeting the Council's legal and Estates fees expenses and outlays together with Stamp and Registration dues and any associated VAT; and
 - (f) any disposal shall require the consent of Scottish Ministers.

TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION FUND AND TOWN CENTRE PROJECTS 2009 - 2010

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development:-

- (a) advising of the details of an application being made imminently by the Council and its partners, to the Scottish Government, for town centre regeneration funds; and

- (b) requesting approval of the use of relevant town centre budget allocations as leverage within the application and as a consequence, requesting that the Committee notes the delay to the allocation of capital spend to specific town centre projects which will be reported to the Committee following the outcome of the application.

An additional paper providing information on the proposed projects and indicative costs for town centre improvements that would form the bid was circulated to Members at this point in the proceedings.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the details of the application, which the Council intends to submit with its partners;
- (2) to the use of Council funds as detailed in paragraph 2.3 of the report for leverage; and
- (3) to await the outcome of the application before agreeing to the list of town centre projects against Council spend for 2009-2010.

DALMUIR PARK HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND REGENERATION PROJECT

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development advising on the progress of the Council's Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) application in relation to the Dalmuir Park Regeneration Project. This information was requested by Members at the Council Meeting held on 25 March 2009.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that consideration of the report be continued to the next meeting of the Committee to enable further information to be obtained.

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 its current service providers until 30 April 2010.

After hearing the Executive Director and following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note that an extended contract with the current service providers would enable the Council to continue to provide a flexible service to meet peaks of demand;

- (2) 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 2010; and
- (3) to note that it was anticipated that the Council's use of Temporary Agency Staff (Craft) would be minimised.

PERFORMANCE REPORT – DELIVERY OF BUSINESS GATEWAY SERVICES

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing information on the management and delivery of Business Gateway services in Dunbartonshire from April 2008 – March 2009.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note that the first year of Local Authority management of the Business Gateway contract showed that the contractor had managed to deliver the revised targets within budget;
- (2) to note that the Key Performance Indicators would continue to be closely monitored and, where necessary, the appropriate corrective action would be taken; and
- (3) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

EMPLOYABILITY PROGRAMMES DELIVERED BY THE SKILLSEEKERS SECTION DURING 2008/09 FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development advising on the performance of the Skillseekers Section in the delivery of national training programmes and local initiatives and providing information on the level of funding secured from Skills Development Scotland (SDS) for 2009/10.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the success of the Skillseekers Section in providing training opportunities for young people in West Dunbartonshire;
- (2) to thank officers for their work in continuing to deliver high quality training opportunities to young people in West Dunbartonshire; and
- (3) that a visit be arranged to the Skillseekers Section for Members of the Committee to witness the work being carried out in providing training opportunities to young people in West Dunbartonshire.

SPT TRANSPORTATION FUNDING 2009/2010

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development advising of the recent award of grant funding totalling £888,000 from Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) and detailing the transportation projects to be undertaken.

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

- (1) to note the award of grant and the projects listed, selected and approved for implementation by SPT; and
- (2) that authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development to take appropriate action to facilitate the works on receipt of the formal grant offer.

ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT WORKS PROGRAMME 2009/10

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development informing of the proposed programme of road infrastructure improvement works to be undertaken during 2009/10.

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

- (1) to note that continued funding to maintain and improve the road network in a safe condition was considered essential. Funding levels in recent years had been maintained and allowed a planned maintenance programme to be developed and delivered;
- (2) to note that the projects contained in Appendix 1 of the report were based on technical need;
- (3) to approve the road infrastructure improvement programme 2009/2010 as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report; and
- (4) that a report would be provided to the next meeting of the Committee on the possibility of replacing bulbs in existing street lighting columns to allow for the provision of white street lighting.

The meeting closed at 11.35 a.m.