

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Social Justice Committee held in the Council Chamber, Municipal Buildings, Dumbarton Road, Clydebank on Wednesday, 11 February 2004 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Denis Agnew, James Flynn, Douglas McAllister, Linda McColl, Marie McNair, Martin Rooney and Andy White.

Attending: Tim Huntingford, Chief Executive; Alexis Jay, Director of Social Work and Housing Services; Anne Ritchie, Head of Social Work Operations; Bill Clark, Head of Strategy; Cy Neil, Head of Housing Services; Neil McKechnie, Head of Service, Education and Cultural Services; Jim Pow, Manager of Resources; Willie Croft, Property Services Manager; and Craig Stewart, Administrative Assistant.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Jim Bollan and Margaret McGregor.

Councillor James Flynn in the Chair

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 1787 The Minutes of the Meeting of the Social Justice Committee held on 10 December 2003 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

TACKLING DOMESTIC ABUSE IN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE: PRESENTATION

- 1788 The Committee heard a joint presentation on Tackling Domestic Abuse in West Dunbartonshire. In this respect, the Committee heard from Anni Donaldson, West Dunbartonshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (WDDAP), Elizabeth Gillespie, Dumbarton District Women's Aid and Margaret Dickson of Personnel Services, West Dunbartonshire Council, (all in attendance for this item only) on the ways in which Domestic Abuse was being dealt with by various partners/agencies in West Dunbartonshire and the social and employment issues associated with this matter.
- 1789 After discussion and following a question and answer session, the Convener, Councillor Flynn, thanked Ms. Donaldson, Ms. Gillespie and Ms. Dickson for their most informative presentation which had stimulated much discussion and debate on this serious issue.

NOTE: Councillor Calvert, who is not a Member of the Committee, left the meeting after the presentation.

VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

- 1790 After hearing the Convener, Councillor Flynn, the Committee agreed to vary the Order of Business as hereinafter recorded.

SINGERS AND PLAYERS

- 1791 A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services informing of progress made in delivering the Singers and Players project.
- 1792 It was noted that the Singers and Players programme was a success in West Dunbartonshire with a total of 50 schools and centres taking part, from every part of the authority, in twelve projects and four additional in-service activities. In this connection, 2,836 children and young people took part as members of the audience, as well as new and developing musicians in well over 100 workshops and performances.
- 1793 After discussion and having heard Mr McKechnie, Head of Service, Educational and Cultural Services, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) that the contents of the report be noted; and
 - (2) to congratulate the staff, parents, pupils and participating musicians for the success of the project.

THE CLYDEBANK STORY – WEBSITE

- 1794 A report was submitted by the Director of Education and Cultural Services informing of the proposals presented to West Dunbartonshire Council Library Service to enter into partnership with The Glasgow Story consortium in order to set up a web-site entitled *TheClydebankStory*, containing illustrated stories about the history and heritage of Clydebank.
- 1795 Having heard Councillor Agnew, Service Spokesperson for Cultural Services, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) that the contents of the report be noted; and
 - (2) to the participation of the Library Service in *TheClydebankStory*.

YOUTH JUSTICE

- 1796 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services advising the Committee of the work of the West Dunbartonshire Multi Agency Youth Justice Forum; the expectations placed upon the Council and Partner Agencies by the Scottish Executive in relation to Youth Justice; and reporting on the specific funding allocated for this purpose.

1797 Following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress made in developing positive responses to youth justice within West Dunbartonshire;
- (2) to note the multi-agency involvement of partners in the Youth Justice Forum;
- (3) to the continuation of funding for the Positive Futures key worker post at a cost of £20,000 per annum for a further two years; and
- (4) to note that a further report on the Action Plan for 2004-05, providing details of funding for future years, would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOURCE TRANSFER NHS ARGYLL & CLYDE

1798 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services advising on the current status of discussions and negotiations with NHS Argyll & Clyde relating to Resource Transfer issues at the Vale of Leven Hospital in Alexandria.

1799 Following discussion, the Committee agreed the financial proposals detailed in the report.

STAFFING POSITION

1800 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services advising of the current staffing position for qualified social work staff within the Department of Social Work and Housing Services.

1801 Having heard the Director of Social Work and Housing Services, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the current levels of qualified social workers within the Department of Social Work and Housing Services;
- (2) to support the actions being taken to address the problem of recruitment and retention of staff; and
- (3) to note that a report advising on the staffing position of the department and providing details of the implications for service would be submitted to future meetings of the Committee on a regular basis.

**AUDIT SCOTLAND PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF MANAGEMENT
OF COMMUNITY EQUIPMENT & ADAPTATION
SERVICES 2002/2003**

1802 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services advising of the recent Audit Scotland review of the Management of Equipment & Adaptations and the subsequent Action Plan prepared in conjunction with Audit Scotland.

1803 The Committee agreed:-

- (1) that the contents of the report be noted; and
- (2) that the Director of Social Work and Housing Services be requested to prepare periodic reports on the implementation of the Action Plan for consideration at future meetings of the Committee.

**AMENDMENT TO THE HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2001
(HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES) REGULATIONS 2002**

1804 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services advising on a proposed amendment to the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (Housing Support Services) Regulations 2002.

1805 The Committee agreed:-

- (1) that the contents of the report be noted; and
- (2) to endorse the proposed amendment, in order to allow all prescribed housing support services to continue to be eligible for the payment of grants.

**SENSORY IMPAIRMENT CONSULTATION AND
NETWORKING EVENT**

1806 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services advising of the Sensory Impairment Consultation and Networking Day hosted by West Dunbartonshire Council on 22 January 2004.

1807 The Committee agreed:-

- (1) that the contents of the report be noted;
- (2) that the Department of Social Work and Housing Services would progress arrangements for the implementation of a Sensory Impairment Strategy Group; and

- (3) to note that regular progress reports would be made available to the Health Improvement and Social Justice Partnership on this issue.

GYPSY/TRAVELLERS 'ENERGY & CARAVANS' RESEARCH PROJECT

- 1808 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services advising of the successful bid to Energy Savings Trust Scottish Projects Fund to fund the Gypsy/Travellers 'Energy & Caravans' Research Project.
- 1809 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

CLYDEBANK HOUSING ASSOCIATION – MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

- 1810 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive concerning a request from Clydebank Housing Association that consideration be given to the nomination of a member to represent the Council on the Management Committee of the Association.
- 1811 Having heard the Convener, Councillor Flynn, the Committee agreed that Councillor Gail Casey be nominated to represent the Council on the Management Committee of Clydebank Housing Association.

HRA CAPITAL BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT: PERIOD 9, 2003/04

- 1812 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services advising of the progress of the HRA Capital Programme to 31 December 2003.
- 1813 Having heard the Convener, Councillor Flynn, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGETARY POSITION 2003/04

- 1814 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services informing on how key elements within the Housing Revenue Account performed against the projected outturn for the period ended 31 December 2003 (period 9).
- 1815 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

**HOUSING MAINTENANCE DLO AND WINDOW FACTORY
FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE – PERIOD 9, 2003/04**

- 1816 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services presenting the interim cumulative financial information for the period from 1 April to 31 December 2003 (Period 9).
- 1817 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

SOCIAL WORK AND HOUSING BUDGETARY POSITION 2003/04

- 1818 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services informing on how key elements within the Social Work and Housing (excluding HRA) departments performed against probable outturn for the period ended 31 December 2003 (Period 9).
- 1819 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

VOIDS AND LETTINGS

- 1820 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services providing:-
- (a) details of void figures at 31 December 2003;
 - (b) an analysis of voids at 31 December 2003;
 - (c) details of the number of voids per ward at 31 December 2003; and
 - (d) an analysis of lets for the period October to December 2003.
- 1821 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

HOUSE WAITING LIST

- 1822 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services providing details of the number of applicants on the waiting list for West Dunbartonshire Council houses as at 31 December 2003. Information on waiting list trends was also included together with a note of figures for 2002/03 for comparison.
- 1823 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMON HOUSING REGISTER

- 1824 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services advising that West Dunbartonshire Council in partnership with local Registered Social Landlords was committed to the development of a Common Housing Register (CHR) as set out in the Scottish Executive's National Framework for CHRs, and that a Working Group had been set up to take this forward.
- 1825 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

- 1826 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services providing an update on the progress made on the development of West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Strategy.
- 1827 The Committee agreed:-
- (1) to note the progress made in developing and implementing West Dunbartonshire's homelessness strategy; and
 - (2) to note that progress reports on the strategy would be submitted to the Social Justice Committee and the Health Improvement and Social Justice Partnership on a regular basis.

HOUSE SALES

- 1828 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services providing details of houses sold to sitting tenants under the Right to Buy legislation between 1 April and 31 December 2003. The report also included information on trends in house sales together with a note of sales in the previous financial year for comparison.
- 1829 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

HOUSING BENEFIT AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT

- 1830 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services providing details of the time taken to process claims for housing benefit and council tax benefit, and of the case load administered by the benefits section. This report covers the period from 1 April to 31 December 2003.
- 1831 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

ANTI-SOCIAL INVESTIGATION AND SUPPORT TEAM

1832 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services providing a statistical update on the work undertaken by the Anti-Social Investigation and Support Team (ASIST).

1833 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

The meeting closed at 11.00 a.m.