

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Community Initiatives Committee held in Dalmuir C.E. Centre, Duntocher Road, Clydebank on Friday, 8 June 2001 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Linda McColl and John Syme.

Also Present: June Todd and Murdoch Cameron, West Dunbartonshire Community Council Forum; Frances McGonagle, Lone Parent Group; Margaret Morrison, Clydebank Forum on Disability; Hope Robertson, South Drumry Tenants' and Residents' Association and John Jermy, Bellsmyre Neighbourhood Forum.

Attending: Anne Clegg, Research Officer; Ronny Lee and Michelle Oliver, Social Work and Housing Services; Louise McHugh, Solicitor and Dave Low, Administrative Assistant.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors James Bollan, James McCallum and Ian McDonald.

Public Gallery: One member of the public was present.

Councillor Linda McColl in the Chair

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, Councillor McColl introduced Fiona Anderson to those present and advised that Ms. Anderson had recently taken up the post of Administrative Assistant, Community Support.

MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 6 April 2001 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

PRESENTATION THE HOUSING BILL

Councillor McColl advised that an invitation had been extended to Social Work and Housing Services to give a presentation on the Housing Bill to this meeting and introduced Ronny Lee and Michelle Oliver to those present.

Mr. Lee advised those present that the Housing Bill would most likely become the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 in the near future.

He thereafter outlined the 6 sections to the Bill as follows:-

- Homelessness
- Tenants of Social Landlords
- Regulation of Social Landlords
- Scottish Homes
- Strategic Housing Functions
- Grants for Improvements and Repairs

Homelessness

The Committee were advised by Mr. Lee that, in terms of the Bill, Councils would have to play a more proactive role. A higher standard of advice and information would have to be provided and new roles would be defined for registered social landlords.

Tenants and Social Landlords

Ms. Oliver advised that a Scottish Secure Tenancy will be established thus standardising tenancies throughout Scotland. She added that a right of succession will be established and changes will be made to the discount system in terms of the right to buy. The Bill also provides that meaningful consultation between tenants and registered social landlords will have to take place.

Regulation of Social Landlords

Mr. Lee informed the Committee that Scottish Homes will become responsible for the registration and regulation of all social landlords. The work presently carried out by Audit Scotland will be assumed by Scottish Homes.

Scottish Homes

Ms. Oliver explained that Scottish Homes will become a new Executive Agency of the Scottish Executive. Scottish Homes central office will become responsible for the audit of social landlord housing provision whilst the local/area offices will focus more upon regeneration issues.

Strategic Housing Functions

The development of local housing strategies would lie with local authorities, members of the Committee were informed. Arising from this, the Council would undertake more strategic planning for housing in terms of socio-economic needs. More formal links would require to be developed with the community as well as strengthening links with the community planning process and the links to other strategic plans.

Grants for Improvements, Repairs etc.

The Committee were informed that powers would be extended to make improvements to property to help them reach the tolerable standard although no increase in funding

had been identified. The level of grants would be increased from £12,000 to £20,000, up to 40% of any total cost and would be means tested.

After questions from the Committee, Councillor McColl thanked Mr. Lee and Ms. Oliver for attending the Meeting and giving the presentation. Mr. Lee and Ms. Oliver then withdrew from the Meeting.

REVIEW OF THE SCHEME FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMUNITY COUNCILS

A report was submitted by the Director of Corporate Services (i) setting out the necessary arrangements and timetable for progressing a review of the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils in West Dunbartonshire in accordance with the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973; (ii) proposing that the October 2001 Community Council elections be postponed until the new scheme is adopted; and (iii) suggesting that the Working Group previously established with representatives from West Dunbartonshire Council and the West Dunbartonshire Community Council Forum to oversee the review process, be reconvened.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (a) to reconvene the previous Working Group to oversee the review process;
- (b) to note the proposed timetable for the review as detailed in the report; and
- (c) that the Community Councils Forum continue to be consulted in relation to the review process and the postponement of the elections due to be held in October 2001.

DRAFT PARTNERSHIP STATEMENT

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive seeking comments on the proposals contained in the Draft Partnership Statement shown as Appendix I to these minutes and methods through which these proposals could be carried forward and developed.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (a) to pass any comments directly to Anne Clegg;
- (b) that the amended Partnership Statement be sent to community and voluntary groups at the end of July and feed-back invited until the end of September;
- (c) after the consultation period, a revised Statement or summary be issued, with publicity, to community and voluntary groups and the wider public; and

- (d) a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on the progress made.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVES COMMITTEE

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive on existing arrangements for membership of the Community Initiatives Committee and inviting discussion on how the membership could be updated to improve community representation and participation.

Anne Clegg tabled a letter from Clydebank Youth Forum regarding their possible membership of the Committee. It was suggested that the Dumbarton and Vale of Leven Youth Forums could be invited to raise issues through the Clydebank Youth Forum representative.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (a) that the Clydebank Youth Forum representative, Mr. Michael McInally, or substitute be invited to attend future meetings of the Committee;
- (b) that the organisations represented on the Community Initiatives Committee who have not been sending representatives to meetings be written to in order to ascertain their willingness to continue membership of the Committee;
- (c) that the response to the above exercise be reported to the October meeting of the Committee;
- (d) that the possible introduction of evening meetings for the Committee be further investigated;
- (e) the rotation of groups on the Community Initiatives Committee be reviewed every two years; and
- (f) that a system be established to follow up members of the Committee who fail to attend a number of consecutive meetings.

BUDGET CONSULTATION PROCESS

Anne Clegg reported that the Budget Consultation Process was currently under review and outlined some of the areas that had been identified for change and improvement.

She added that feedback on the budget consultation that had been received from the public at the Community Conference workshop would be included in the review process in addition to comments from Council Departments.

The Committee agreed:-

- (a) to note the progress made on the review of the Budget Consultation process; and
- (b) that a further report be made submitted upon completion of the review.

NEWS UPDATE

Copies of the Council's 'News Update' publication were circulated to members of the Committee.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (a) that the News Update was an important publication;
- (b) that, subject to budgetary considerations, it be included in the agenda papers for future meetings of the Community Initiatives Committee; and
- (c) that it be distributed to libraries and community groups.

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES COMMITTEE - AMENDED TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS

With reference to the Meeting of the Community Initiatives Committee held on 6 April 2001, the Committee considered and noted the amended dates and venues for future meetings as follows:-

10 August 2001	Alexandria C.E. Centre
12 October 2001	Dalmuir C.E. Centre
14 December 2001	Concord C.E. Centre

OPEN FORUM: APRIL 2001 - RESPONSE

Dave Low advised that he was awaiting a response from the Council's Education and Cultural Services Department in relation to the two issues raised at the last Open Forum session.

OPEN FORUM

The Committee considered one issue during the Open Forum session as shown in Appendix II to these Minutes.

The meeting closed at 3.45 p.m.

APPENDIX II

OPEN FORUM

**VENUE OF COMMUNITY INITIATIVES COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN
DALMUIR**

A Member of the Committee suggested that an alternative location in Dalmuir C.E. Centre be investigated since the present and previous meeting rooms had proved to be noisy.

It was agreed that the Conference Room in the Centre be investigated for possible use as a meeting venue.