

HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee held by Zoom Video Conference on Wednesday, 4 November 2020 at 10.05 a.m.

Present: Councillors Gail Casey, Ian Dickson, Diane Docherty, Caroline McAllister, David McBride, Jonathan McColl, Iain McLaren, Marie McNair, and Sally Page.

Attending: Peter Barry, Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability; John Kerr, Housing Development and Homelessness Manager; Edward Thomas, Housing Operations Manager; Martin Feeney, Building Services Manager; Janice Rainey, Finance Business Partner; Sally Michael, Principal Solicitor; Alan Young, Housing Asset and Investment Manager; Michelle Lynn, Asset Coordinator and Lynn Straker, Committee Officer.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Karen Conaghan, John Millar and John Mooney.

Councillor Diane Docherty in the Chair

STATEMENT BY CHAIR – AUDIO STREAMING

Councillor Docherty, Chair, welcomed everyone to the November meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee which was being held remotely, in terms of Section 43 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

Accordingly, the Chair advised that a process/procedure had been developed for the meeting (a copy of which had previously been circulated to Members). Thereafter, the Committee agreed to note the procedure in place for the conduct of the meeting and the meeting then continued by video conferencing.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee held on 2 September 2020 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

OPEN FORUM

The Committee noted that no open forum questions had been submitted by members of the public.

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY UPDATE – MORE HOMES BETTER HOMES

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability providing an update on progress in delivering the More Homes Better Homes Housing Asset Management Strategy 2018-2023 approved by the Committee in February 2018.

After discussion and having heard from the Housing Development and Homelessness Manager and the Housing Asset and Investment Officer in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress made in the implementation of the Strategy;
- (2) to note the results of the Asset Management Database assessment and proposed future action; and
- (3) to note that the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability would provide an update on this matter to the Committee early in 2021.

ENHANCED STANDARD FOR HIGH RISE FLATS

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability providing an update on the Council's work to develop the enhanced standard for high rise flats and provide reassurance to our tenants that these properties are as safe and desirable as conventional dwellings.

After discussion and having heard from the Housing Operations Manager and the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the content of the report and the draft specification of works towards enhancing standards for high rise flats;
- (2) to note that officers would consult the Ministerial Working Group for Building and Fire Safety regarding the specification;
- (3) to invite officers to prepare a Capital plan for enhancement works based on the draft specification and feedback from the working group for approval at a future meeting of the Committee.
- (4) to request a Briefing Note with an update on the fire doors at Burnside Court and the ongoing safety concerns.

MORE HOMES WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN 2021/2022 -2025/2026 UPDATE REPORT

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability seeking approval for the More Homes West Dunbartonshire Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) for 2021/22 – 2025/26 which requires to be submitted to the Scottish Government.

After discussion and having heard from the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability and from the Housing Development and Homelessness Manager in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the draft the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) for 2021/22 - 2025/26 as appended to the report; and
- (2) to invite the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability to implement the SHIP in partnership with relevant key stakeholders.

APPROVAL FOR SUBCONTRACTOR PROCUREMENT FOR BUILDING SERVICES

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead, Regeneration seeking approval to authorise Subcontractor Procurement for Building Services for Kitchen, Bathroom and Shower Works and Supply and Installation of UPVC Windows and Doors.

After discussion and having heard the Housing Development and Homelessness Manager in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to authorise Subcontractor Procurement for Building Services for Kitchen, Bathroom and Shower Works and Supply and Installation of UPVC Windows and Doors; and
- (2) to note that, on conclusion of the procurement exercise, a further report would be submitted to the Tendering Committee with recommendations on the award of the contracts.

BUILDING SERVICES ACTIONS TO IMPROVE TENANTS SATISFACTION WITH THE SERVICE

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead, Regeneration advising of actions being taken to improve tenants' satisfaction with the Council's Maintenance and Repairs Services delivered by Building Services.

After discussion and having heard from Building Services Manager, the Housing Asset and Investment Manager and the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report;
- (2) to note updates on progress would be monitored; and
- (3) that the Building Services Tenant Satisfaction performance would be reported within the Scottish Social Charter Update Report presented to the Committee for 2020/2021.
- (4) to note that the Building Services Manager would arrange for a Briefing Note to be issued to Elected Members detailing plans for the Employment structure once agreed.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE – HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY REVIEW

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability seeking approval for some technical updates to the Housing Allocations Policy and providing a timetable for a full update and review of the policy to be carried out.

After discussion and having heard from the Housing Development and Homelessness Manager in further explanation and in answer to a Member's question, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the technical changes to the Housing Allocations Policy outlined in this report and proposed Annex to the policy;
- (2) to note that these changes could be implemented immediately; and
- (3) to note the timetable for delivery of a full review and update of the West Dunbartonshire Allocation Policy being proposed.

SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER/REGULATION OF SOCIAL HOUSING IN SCOTLAND PROGRESS REPORT

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead – Housing and Employability providing Members with benchmarking information relating to how the Council has performed against the Scottish Social Housing Charter indicators and providing an update into how we are meeting the requirements of the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework

After discussion and having heard from the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability and in answers to a Members' question, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of this report and recognise the continued improvements across Housing and Homelessness Services in West Dunbartonshire;

- (2) to note that a Charter Improvement Plan had been developed based on a comprehensive assessment of performance and had informed on the production and publication of the Council's annual Charter Performance Report;
- (3) to approve the Council's Annual Assurance Statement, and for this to be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator as per the regulatory requirement; and
- (4) to note that a full annual progress report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter would be submitted to the August 2021 meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee.

MORE HOMES – WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLY DELIVERY PROGRAMME

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability providing an update on progress with West Dunbartonshire's More Homes Programme which oversees the strategic delivery of the Council's new homes.

After discussion and having heard from the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability and the Housing Development and Homelessness Manager and Asset Coordinator in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the content of the report and the progress made to date in the delivery of the Council's More Homes West Dunbartonshire approach including the first handovers of the new homes at the Haldane development;
- (2) to note that the report and the delivery of the Council's ambitious plans to deliver new homes to meet housing need would include significant Member involvement in its delivery and as such a regular update report would be provided to the Housing and Communities Committee;
- (3) to approve the continuing discussion regarding acquisition of available land at Willox Park, Dumbarton (former care home site) and Bank Street, Alexandria by the HRA from General Services subject to the valuation figures once they are available and subject to a viable housing scheme being deliverable with detailed progress on the project provided at each future Housing and Communities Committee as part of this report;
- (4) to authorise the Strategic Lead, Regeneration and Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability to conclude negotiations; and
- (5) to authorise the Strategic Lead, Regulatory to conclude the transaction on such conditions as were considered appropriate.

HOUSING AND EMPLOYABILITY DELIVERY PLAN 2019/2020 YEAR END PROGRESS REPORT AND 2020/2021 DELIVERY PLAN

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability providing Members with the final position against the 2019/20 Delivery Plan and presenting the 2020/21 Delivery Plan.

After discussion and having the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability in further explanation, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress made on the delivery on the 2019/20 plan; and
- (2) otherwise to note the 2020/21 Delivery Plan.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2020 (PERIOD 6)

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability providing an update on the financial performance to 30 September 2020 (Period 6) of the HRA revenue and capital budgets for 2020/21.

After discussion and having heard the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability in further explanation, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note that the revenue account currently showed a projected annual favourable variance of £1.807m (4.09% of the total budget), of which £1.773m was COVID related; and
- (2) to note the net projected annual position in relation to relevant capital projects which was highlighting an in-year variance of £10.695m (17.85%) due to projected slippage of £11.675m (19.59%) and an overspend of 0.980m (-1.64%).

FINANCIAL REPORT 2020-2021 AS AT PERIOD 6 (30 SEPTEMBER 2020)

A joint report was submitted by the Strategic Lead, Housing and Communities and Strategic Lead, Regeneration providing an update on the financial performance to 30 September 2020 (Period 6) of those services under the auspices of the Housing and Communities Committee.

After discussion and having heard the Strategic Lead, Housing and Employability in further explanation of the report, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report which showed the revenue budget forecast to overspend against budget by £0.008m (0.15%) at the year-end;
- (2) to note the net projected annual position in relation to relevant capital projects which was showing no projected variance; and

- (3) to note the progress on efficiencies incorporated into budgets for 2020/21.

SCRUTINY REPORTS

(A) POLICE SCRUTINY – QUARTER 1 2020/2021 REPORT

A report was submitted by the Divisional Commander, Police Scotland providing an update on Quarter 1 2020/21 performance against the Local Police Plan.

After discussion and having heard from the Divisional Commander, John Paterson, Police Scotland in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the update given on the progress against the Local Police Plan.

(B) FIRE AND RESCUE SCRUTINY QUARTER 2 REPORT – 01 JULY 2020 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2020

A report was submitted by the Local Senior Officer, Joe McKay, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service providing appropriate performance data measured against priorities in the West Dunbartonshire Local Fire and Rescue Plan.

Having heard the Local Senior Officer, Fire and Rescue Service, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the SFRS West Dunbartonshire Council Year to Date Report covering the period 1 July – 30 September 2020.

The meeting closed at 12:30 p.m.