

HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee held in Committee Room 3, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton, on Wednesday, 1 February 2017 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Gail Casey, William Hendrie, David McBride, Jonathan McColl*, Marie McNair, John Mooney, Lawrence O'Neill, Tommy Rainey, Gail Robertson, Martin Rooney and Kath Ryall.

*Arrived later in the meeting.

Attending: Richard Cairns, Strategic Director - Regeneration, Environment and Growth; Peter Barry, Strategic Lead - Housing and Employability; Jim McAloon, Strategic Lead - Regeneration; Ryan Chalmers, Section Head - Revenues and Benefits; Martin Feeney, Building Services Manager; Stuart Gibson, Assets Coordinator; John Kerr, Housing Development and Homelessness Manager; Arun Menon, Business Support Manager; Alan Young, Housing Asset and Investment Manager; Sally Michael, Section Head - Contracts and Property; and Scott Kelly, Committee Officer.

Apology: An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Hazel Sorrell.

Councillor David McBride 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 and Communities Committee held on 2 November 2016 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

MORE HOMES BETTER HOMES WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE – COUNCIL HOUSE NEW BUILD PROGRESS REPORT

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead - Housing and Employability providing an update on progress with the Council's Housing New Build Programme and details of the proposed forward programme.

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

- (1) to note the content of the report and the progress made to date;
- (2) in principle to the Council's future new build plans as outlined at paragraph 4.7 of the report, and set out in the Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) approved by the Housing and Communities Committee on 2 November 2016, which will see the Council directly build a minimum of 335 new homes over the next 5 year period;
- (3) to note that the Council would build an additional 100 new council homes for rent over a 5 year period if the Council were awarded parity in terms of the subsidy available to housing associations; and
- (4) to note that a further progress report will be submitted to the next meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee.

Note: Councillor McColl entered the meeting during consideration of this item.

MORE THAN A ROOF – WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL'S HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION AND TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY 2017 - 2020

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead - Housing and Employability seeking approval for the new Homelessness Prevention and Temporary Accommodation Strategy entitled 'More Than a Roof' for 2017-2020, as detailed within Appendix 1 to the report. It was noted that a replacement for the page containing the Foreword to Appendix 1 to the report had been circulated to Members in advance of the meeting.

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

- (1) to note the progress and achievements made in relation to the implementation of the previous Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 including an 18% reduction in homelessness levels;
- (2) to approve 'More Than A Roof – West Dunbartonshire Council's Homelessness Prevention and Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2017-2020', as detailed within Appendix 1 to the report;

- (3) a programme of rotation of temporary units, every three years being the norm, with progress to be made as soon as practical and reported back to this Committee on a regular basis; and
- (4) to instruct the Strategic Lead - Housing and Employability to ensure effective implementation of the Strategy and action plan, and report back to the Housing and Communities Committee on an annual basis.

INVOLVING YOU – WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL’S TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2017-2020

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead - Housing and Employability:-

- (a) providing information on the Council’s statutory obligations under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and 2010; and
- (b) seeking approval of the new draft West Dunbartonshire Council Tenant Participation Strategy which will cover the period 2017-2020, as detailed within Appendix 1 to the report.

It was noted that a replacement for the page containing the Foreword to Appendix 1 to the report had been circulated to Members in advance of the meeting.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress and achievements made in relation to the implementation of the previous Tenant Participation Strategy 2013-2016 and the Council’s statutory obligation to have a Tenant Participation Strategy in place;
- (2) to approve the draft West Dunbartonshire Tenant Participation Strategy 2017-2020 and associated draft action plan in principle, subject to any amendments as determined in consultation with RTOs (Registered Tenant Organisations) and WDTRO (West Dunbartonshire Tenants and Residents Organisation); and
- (3) to instruct the Strategic Lead - Housing and Employability to ensure effective implementation of the Strategy and action plan, and report back to Committee on an ongoing annual basis.

BUILDING SERVICES COMMERCIAL CONTRACTS & ACTIVITIES

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead - Regeneration:-

- (a) providing information on Building Services Commercial Contracts and Activities;
- (b) seeking agreement to formally enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority; and

- (c) seeking approval for the Strategic Director - Regeneration, Environment and Growth to have delegated authority to approve Building Services entering into future Commercial Contracts as appropriate.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to acknowledge that Building Services commercial activities are and will continue to be limited to public sector organisations including; local Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), Government Organisations and other Local Authorities;
- (2) to give approval to formally enter into a MOU with Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park Authority providing a Building Maintenance Service for its Built Structures within the boundaries of the National Park;
- (3) to grant delegated authority to the Strategic Director - Regeneration, Environment and Growth to approve Building Services entering into future commercial contracts with external organisations as noted in (1) above; and
- (4) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

BUILDING SERVICES PROCUREMENT PROVISION UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead - Regeneration:-

- (a) advising of additional tender requirements identified, some of which crossover between Building Services and other council services; and
- (b) seeking approval to initiate necessary procurement and tender processes.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the procurement processes to tender the requirements listed within the table in section 4.2 of the report;
- (2) that the results of the tenders are brought to an appropriate meeting of the Tendering Committee for approval; and
- (3) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

RENT ARREARS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead - Resources seeking approval to purchase a rent arrears management system named Mobyssoft Housing Intelligence's RentSense Software.

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

- (1) to approve the purchase of the RentSense Software initially for 12 months at a one off cost of £52,880, with an option to take a further 12 months at a cost of £43,350;
- (2) that funding will be provided from within the current HRA allocation for rent collection payments and officers will report back to this Committee on the progress; and
- (3) that any extension into year 2 would only be done after an evaluation of the solution's success at the end of the initial 12 months in supporting the effective management of rent arrears.

WORKING WELL TOGETHER – ATTENDANCE MANAGEMENT: QUARTER 3

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead - People and Technology advising on attendance levels across the Council for Quarter 3 (October to December 2016), including a breakdown of absence performance by Strategic Lead area.

The Committee agreed to note the content of the report and the attendance results for Q3 2016/17, namely a decrease of 337 FTE days lost (3.3%) compared to the same period last year.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2016/17 AS AT PERIOD 9 (31 DECEMBER 2016)

A report was submitted by the Strategic Director - Regeneration, Environment and Growth providing an update on the financial performance to 31 December 2016 (Period 9) of those services under the auspices of the Housing and Communities Committee.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report which showed the revenue budget forecast to overspend against budget by £0.025m (2.2%) at the year-end;
- (2) to note the net projected annual capital underspend of £0.376m (62%), which was due to project rephasing; and
- (3) to note the progress on savings incorporated into budgets for 2016/17.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 31 DECEMBER 2016 (PERIOD 9)

A report was submitted by the Strategic Director - Regeneration, Environment and Growth providing an update on the financial performance to 31 December 2016 (Period 9) of the Housing Revenue Account revenue and capital budgets.

Having heard the Housing Development and Homelessness Manager in answer to a Member's question, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the projected favourable revenue variance of £0.504m (1.2%); and
- (2) to note the position advised in relation to the capital budget which was currently projecting an in-year favourable variance of £9.214m (32.4%), of which £8.858m (31.1%) related to project rephasing and an in-year underspend of £0.356m (3.8%).

SALE OF PART OF THE FORMER SITE OF BONHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL TO CUBE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

A report was submitted by the Strategic Lead - Housing and Employability seeking approval for the proposed sale of part of the site of the former Bonhill Primary School to Cube Housing Association (CHA). It was noted that the report had been circulated to Members without Appendices 1 and 2 and there were submitted (tabled) copies of the missing appendices.

Following discussion and having heard the Housing Development and Homelessness Manager and the Assets Coordinator in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the sale of part of the former Bonhill Primary School site as shown in Appendix 1 to the report for a nominal consideration of £1 (One Pound Sterling); and
- (2) to authorise the Strategic Lead - Regulatory to conclude the transaction on such conditions as considered appropriate.

The meeting closed at 11.40 a.m.