

HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

At a Hybrid Meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee held in the Civic Space, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 23 August 2023 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Ian Dickson, Gurpreet Singh Johal, David McBride, Jonathan McColl, James McElhill, Michelle McGinty, Lawrence O'Neill, Lauren Oxley, Martin Rooney, Hazel Sorrell and Sophie Traynor.

Attending: Angela Wilson, Chief Officer – Supply, Distribution and Property; John Kerr, Housing Development and Homelessness Manager; Nicola Pettigrew, Housing Operations Manager; Alan Young, Housing Asset and Investment Manager; Janice Rainey, Business Unit Finance Partner; Nigel Ettles, Legal Officer; Nicola Moorcroft and Ashley MacIntyre, Committee Officers.

Also Attending: Chief Superintendent Lynn Ratcliff and Chief Inspector Ryan McMurdo, Police Scotland; Group Commander Greg McKearney, Argyll and Bute, East and West Dunbartonshire, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Apology: An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor John Millar.

Councillor Gurpreet Singh Johal in the Chair

STATEMENT BY CHAIR – AUDIO STREAMING

Councillor Singh Johal, Chair, advised that the meeting was being audio streamed and broadcast live to the internet and would be available for playback.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

RECORDING OF VOTES

The Committee agreed that all votes taken during the meeting would be done by roll call vote to ensure an accurate record.

OPEN FORUM

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

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee held on 3 May 2023 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

SCRUTINY REPORTS

(A) POLICE SCRUTINY REPORT

A report was submitted by the Divisional Commander, Police Scotland providing Members with an update for Quarter 1 on local policing in West Dunbartonshire.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Superintendent and Chief Inspector in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the update provided for Quarter 1.

(B) FIRE AND RESCUE SCRUTINY REPORT

A report was submitted by the Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service providing an update on Quarter 1 performance data measured against priorities in the West Dunbartonshire Local Fire and Rescue Plan.

After discussion and having heard the Group Commander in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the update provided for Quarter 1.

MORE HOMES WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE - WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLY DELIVERY PROGRAMME

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability providing an update on progress with West Dunbartonshire's More Homes Programme, which oversees the delivery of the Council's new home building programme.

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 note the contents of the report and the progress made to date, in the delivery of the Council's More Homes West Dunbartonshire approach; and

- (2) to note the revised Affordable Housing Supply Programme benchmark assumptions outlined in paragraph 6.2 of the report.

SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER/REGULATION OF SOCIAL HOUSING IN SCOTLAND, ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability providing an annual progress report on meeting the requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter and the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework for Social Housing.

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

- (1) to note the contents of the report recognising the ongoing legacy impact the pandemic had on 2022/23 performance and the key areas of focus for the Housing Improvement Board (HIB) during 2023/24 outlined at paragraph 4.8 of the report; and
- (2) that a further progress report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter be submitted to the November 2023 meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee. The report would include detailed benchmarking performance information against all local authorities in Scotland highlighting the impacts of the pandemic on housing and homelessness services across Scotland.

ENHANCED HOUSING CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME BETTER HOMES WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability providing an update on the work of the Tenant/Officer Task and Finish Group, having agreed a revised spending profile to deliver an additional £30m of investment in Council homes over the next five year, following the decision taken by West Dunbartonshire Council to a weekly rent increase of 5% in 2023/24.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Supply, Distribution and Property and the Housing Development and Homelessness Manager in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report and the progress made to date, in the delivery of the Council's ambitions around housing investment;
- (2) to note the work of the Tenant/Officer Short Life Task and Finish Group in developing an Enhanced Housing Capital Investment Programme, in particular the role of the tenant representatives: and

- (3) to approve the Enhanced Housing Capital Investment Programme and delegated authority to the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability to deliver this Programme within the wider Housing Capital Investment Programme.

‘INVOLVING YOU’ WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL’S TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2021-24 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT“

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability providing an annual progress report on the implementation of “Involving You”, West Dunbartonshire Council’s Tenant Participation Strategy covering the period 2021-24.

After discussion and having heard the Housing Development and Homelessness Manager in further explanation and in answer to Members’ questions, the Committee agreed to note the progress and achievements made, in relation to the implementation of the second year of the strategy’s action plan, including the key role played by tenants and tenant representatives in improving housing services in West Dunbartonshire.

NOMINATIONS AGREEMENT WITH VETERANS HOUSING SCOTLAND

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability seeking agreement to enter into a new Nomination Agreement with Veterans Housing Scotland and West Dunbartonshire Council to provide two Council properties specifically for veterans, on an annual basis.

After discussion and having heard the Housing Development and Homelessness Manager in further explanation and in answer to Members’ questions, the Committee agreed to the proposed nominations agreement with Veterans Housing Scotland in Appendix 1 of the report.

PROGRESS TO RE-LET EMPTY COUNCIL HOUSE PROPERTIES

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Supply, Distribution and Property providing an update on progress to improve the approach to re-let of empty council house properties.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Supply, Distribution and Property in further explanation and in answer to Members’ questions, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET CONTROL REPORT 2023/24 TO 30 JUNE (PERIOD 3)

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources providing an update on the financial performance to 30 June 2023 (Period 3) of the HRA revenue and capital budgets for 2023/24.

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 note the revenue analysis showed projected adverse variances of £1.021m which would be offset by a reduction to the contribution from revenue to capital (CFCR) netting a revenue break even position; and
- (2) to note the net projected annual position in relation to the capital plan highlights an in-year adverse variance of £1.550m (1.24%) as detailed in Appendix 4 of the report.

GENERAL FUND HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES FINANCIAL REPORT 2023/24 PERIOD 3 (30 JUNE 2023)

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources providing an update on the financial performance to 30 June 2023 (Period 3) of General Fund for services under the auspices of the Housing and Communities Committee.

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

- (1) to note the contents of the report which showed the revenue budget forecast to overspend against budget by £0.033m (1%) at the year-end;
- (2) to note the net projected annual position in relation to relevant capital projects shows no projected variance; and
- (3) to note the progress on efficiencies incorporated into budgets for 2023/24.

VALEDICTORY ANGELA WILSON, CHIEF OFFICER – SUPPLY, DISTRIBUTION AND PROPERTY

Councillor Johal Singh advised that this was the last meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee that Angela Wilson, Chief Officer – Supply, Distribution and Property would be attending, as she would be leaving Council service in September. On behalf of all Members of the Committee, he thanked Ms. Wilson for her outstanding service, work and commitment to making West Dunbartonshire a better place to live and wished her well for the future

In response, Ms. Wilson thanked everyone for their kind words and noted thanks to all current and past Members of the Housing and Communities Committee for their leadership and support.

The meeting closed at 12.44 p.m.