

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee: 6 January 2010

Subject: West Dunbartonshire Common Housing Register 'HomeSearch'

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on progress in the development of the Common Housing Register (CHR) in partnership with local Registered Social landlords (RSLs).

2. Background

- 2.1** At Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee on 2 September 2009, it was agreed that progress on the development of the CHR would be a standing agenda item for future Committees.
- 2.2** Representatives from the Council and the RSLs meet on a monthly basis. Sub groups have been established to take forward particular tasks.
- 2.3** The development of the CHR has been discussed with the Tenants & Residents Organisations and other stakeholder groups as part of the ongoing consultation in relation to the review of West Dunbartonshire Council's own Allocations Policy. To date, the principles of streamlining access to social housing by way of a CHR have been well received.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** At Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee on 4 November 2009, members were advised of the strategic issues to be elevated to Director or Chief Executives of the RSLs in consultation with the Executive Director for Housing, Environment and Economic Development. These issues were formalising of the joint working agreement, a common IT solution, apportionment of costs and current and future funding commitment.
- 3.2** Directors/Chief Executives of our RSL partners were invited to attend a workshop held on 9 December 2009 to discuss the progress in relation to the CHR. A list of attendees is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.3** Bill McGhee from North Ayrshire Council was invited to the workshop to share the North Ayrshire experience of the development of their CHR. He delivered a presentation which included the methodology, approach, design and procurement of their common IT solution, their cost sharing formula and implementation arrangements. Members should be aware that the project took almost 5 years from inception to implementation, going live in June 2009.

3.4 Angela Hughes from the Scottish Housing Best Value Network was also invited to the workshop to share her knowledge of the experiences of other authorities in developing their IT solutions. She provided useful advice on issues we would need to consider when procuring our IT solution.

3.5 Establishing a realistic timescale and resource implications will be critical to achieving a CHR for West Dunbartonshire. A project plan including targets to take forward the matters discussed at the workshop will be discussed at the next project team meeting scheduled to take place on 16 December 2009. A verbal update on the outcomes will be provided to the Committee.

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 At present the development of the CHR is being managed within current resources. However, as the project progresses, dedicated resources are likely to be required.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Funding will be required to develop a shared ICT system. It is likely that West Dunbartonshire Council as the major landlord will be responsible for a major part of the overall costs. The proposed cost sharing formula, IT costs and other costs associated with the CHR will be reported to a future HEED Committee.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 Progress in relation to establishing a CHR for West Dunbartonshire is important in developing cohesive services for the communities of West Dunbartonshire to facilitate improvements in accessibility to housing across the area. Beyond this, given the Council's commitment to transfer a proportion of its housing stock as determined in the Standard Delivery Plan, the creation of a CHR will be an important component of supporting access and will aid minimising the risk of fragmented services in the future.

6.2 Securing the creation of the CHR has been identified as a key element in the drive for continuous improvement in housing services. Maintaining the momentum in achieving a successful outcome on this project is therefore critical.

7. Conclusions & Officers' Recommendations

7.1 The development of a comprehensive CHR facilitates ease of access to all social rented housing within the area.

7.2 The workshop held on 9 December 2009 provided useful advice and information to assist progressing the CHR in West Dunbartonshire.

- 7.3 A project plan to take forward the issues discussed at the workshop will be discussed at the next project team meeting on 16 December 2009.
- 7.4 It is recommended that the Committee note the progress to date in the development of the CHR and that a further report outlining the project plan be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

Elaine Melrose
Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development
Date: 11 December 2009

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Appendices: Appendix 1 - List of workshop attendees

Background Papers: West Dunbartonshire Common Housing Register "HomeSearch", Environment and Economic Development Committee, 2 September 2009.

West Dunbartonshire Common Housing Register "HomeSearch", Environment and Economic Development Committee, 4 November 2009.

Wards Affected: All

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|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Elaine Melrose | West Dunbartonshire Council |
| Jim McAloon | West Dunbartonshire Council |
| Peter Sweeney | Bellsmyre HA |
| Stephen Gibson | Cordale HA |
| AnneMarie Arthur | Dunbritton HA |
| Joe McNichol | Dalmuir Park HA |
| Paul McShane | Trafalgar HA |
| Fiona Webster | Clydebank HA |
| Joe Farrell | Clydebank HA |
| Phillip BurrIDGE | Faifley HA |
| Janette Doak | Faifley HA |
| Pierre De Fence | Knowes HA |
| Paul McVey | Knowes HA |
| Angela Hughes | BIB Ltd |
| Bill McGhee | North Ayrshire Council |
| Margaret Caldwell | WDC |
| Janice Lockhart | WDC |
| Barry Sheridan | WDC |