

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Social Justice Committee held in the Council Chambers, Municipal Buildings, Station Road, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 12 April 2006 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Denis Agnew, Jim Bollan, James Flynn, Douglas McAllister, Craig McLaughlin, Linda McColl, Marie McNair and Martin Rooney.

Attending: David McMillan, Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services; Bill Clark, Acting Director of Social Work Services; Stephen Brown, Head of Legal & Administrative Services; John McKerracher, Head of Housing and Property Services; Irving Hodgson, Head of Regeneration Services; Willie Gibson, Section Head, Estates; Margaret Caldwell, Manager of Housing Operations; James Pow, Manager of Finance, Department of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services; Stephen West, Manager of Resources, Department of Social Work Services; Beryl Middleton, Section Head – Quality Assurance & Training Section; Moira Swanson, Research and Information Manager; Lynne McKnight, Section Head – Home Care; Stephen McKendrick, Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator; Lewis Morrison, Policy and Development Officer (Disability and Access) and Nuala Borthwick, Administrative Assistant.

Apology: An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Andy White.

Councillor Denis Agnew in the Chair

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

8642 The Minutes of Meeting of the Social Justice Committee held on 8 February 2006 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

8643 In relation to a point raised by Councillor Rooney relating to point (4) under the item headed “Housing Allocations Policy, Housing Reference Policy and Sheltered Housing Policy for West Dunbartonshire Council” (Page 2178, Paragraph 8089 refers), it was noted that four Members of the Labour Group had been appointed to the Member/Officer Working Group to scrutinise the Housing Allocation Policy and that one Member of the Opposition Group was still to be appointed to the Member/Officer Working Group.

PRESENTATION ON INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8644 Mr Lewis Morrison, Policy and Development Officer (Disability and Access) gave a presentation on Integrated Impact Assessment.
- 8645 Having heard Mr Morrison in answer to Members' questions and following discussion, the Convener, on behalf of the Committee, thanked him for his very interesting and informative presentation.
- 8646 A handout accompanying the presentation was circulated for information.

HOME CARE SERVICE PROVISION – ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS

- 8647 A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services advising of the effect of the recent heavy snowfall on home care service provision and the actions taken to ensure essential services to vulnerable clients were maintained.
- 8648 Having heard the Section Head – Home Care in further explanation of the report, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) that the Acting Director of Social Work Services be instructed to send a letter of thanks on behalf of the Committee to all members of staff who participated in organising and providing care during the period of heavy snowfall; and
 - (2) to otherwise note the content of the report.

INTERIM SINGLE SHARED ASSESSMENT AND CARE MANAGEMENT POLICY

- 8649 A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services providing information on Social Work Services Department's Interim Single Shared Assessment and Care Management Policy and advising of the need to develop and implement clear eligibility criteria for community care services.
- 8650 Having heard Councillor Rooney, Service Spokesperson for Social Work, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) that the implementation of the policy be progressed;
 - (2) that further eligibility criteria for community care services be developed;
 - (3) that regular progress reports be provided for future meetings of the Committee; and
 - (4) otherwise to note the content of the report.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE – SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE STATISTICAL BULLETIN

- 8651 A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services providing information on the Supporting People statistics for West Dunbartonshire Council and for Scotland as a whole.
- 8652 After discussion, the Committee agreed that the Acting Director of Social Work Services be requested to prepare a further report for consideration at the meeting of the Social Justice Committee to be held on 14 June 2006 detailing unmet needs of the Supporting People Service in West Dunbartonshire.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

- 8653 A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services providing information on the development of a policy for Continuing Professional Development within the Social Work Service.
- 8654 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report and policy and the implementation of Continuing Professional Development for Social Workers.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE DOMESTIC ABUSE PARTNERSHIP (WDDAP)

- 8655 A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services advising of the success of the West Dunbartonshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (WDDAP) in securing funding through the Scottish Executive's Violence Against Women and Children's Services Fund. The report also provided an update on some of the achievements of West Dunbartonshire Domestic Abuse Partnership over the period 2001/2006.
- 8656 Having heard Councillor McNair, Service Spokesperson for Equal Opportunities in further explanation of the report and following questions, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to endorse the work of the West Dunbartonshire Domestic Abuse Partnership and recognise the numerous achievements of the partnership;
 - (2) to encourage the integration of the local strategy within the joint work of all relevant strategic partnerships; and
 - (3) to receive regular progress reports on the work of the Partnership.
- 8657 Councillor Agnew, on behalf of the Committee, commended the work of the West Dunbartonshire Domestic Abuse Partnership.

21st CENTURY SOCIAL WORK REVIEW – “CHANGING LIVES”

- 8658 A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services advising of the outcome of the 21st Century Social Work Review and outlining the Scottish Executive's plans to deliver the review's implementation.
- 8659 Having heard Councillor Rooney, Service Spokesperson for Social Work in further explanation, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

SOCIAL WORK GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

- 8660 A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services providing an update of the grants position for 2005/2006 since the meeting of the Social Justice Committee of 8 February 2006.
- 8661 In relation to the decision made at the meeting of the Committee on 8 February 2006 to delegate authority to determine grant applications received in the period to 31 March 2006, Councillor McLaughlin advised that in his opinion this decision was a departure from the normal practice as in the past the Leader of the Opposition had been consulted on awarding of grants.
- 8662 Thereafter, Councillor Bollan, seconded by Councillor McLaughlin, moved that both organisations that had submitted grant applications during the said period be awarded the full amount requested.
- 8663 As an amendment, Councillor Rooney, seconded by Councillor Flynn, moved that the recommendations contained within the report be approved.
- 8664 After discussion, the Committee agreed that Councillor Bollan's motion was not competent without the suspension of Standing Orders.
- 8665 In this respect, Councillor Bollan, seconded by Councillor McLaughlin moved for suspension of Standing Orders.
- 8666 On a vote being taken, 2 Members voted for the suspension of Standing Orders and 6 Members voted against the suspension of Standing Orders. As the necessary two thirds majority had not been obtained, the matter fell.
- 8667 Thereafter the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to note the grants approved, by those delegated to do so by the Social Justice Committee of 8 February 2006, as detailed in the Appendix to this Minute; and
 - (2) to note the likely year end position with the grants budget.

**REQUEST BY CORDALE HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED TO
PURCHASE LEVEN COTTAGE, 52 MAIN STREET, ALEXANDRIA**

- 8668 A joint report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services and the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services advising of a request from Cordale Housing Association Limited to purchase Leven Cottage, 52 Main Street, Alexandria from the Council.
- 8669 After discussion, Councillor Rooney, seconded by Councillor Flynn, moved:-
- 8670 That the Committee agrees:-
- (1) that the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services be authorised to sell Leven Cottage, 52 Main Street, Alexandria to Cordale Housing Association Ltd on the terms and conditions stated in paragraph 3.3 of the report; and
 - (2) that the Head of Legal and Administrative Services be authorised to conclude this transaction subject to such legal conditions as are considered appropriate.
- 8671 As an amendment, Councillor Bollan, seconded by Councillor McLaughlin, moved:-
- (1) As part of the development Cordale Housing Association Ltd will build a minimum of 5 very sheltered housing units in Alexandria
 - (2) the date of entry shall be 12 May 2006 or at a date agreed between all parties;
 - (3) that the sale is subject to the availability of funding;
 - (4) that if the existing residents opt to remain in the accommodation then the Department will meet the balance of the cost of their current 24 hours care package, after housing benefit etc is deducted. The Council payment will be no less than £30,000 per year and will increase by the rate of inflation at December 2006 + 1%; and
 - (5) that the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services be authorised to sell Leven Cottage, 52 North Main Street, Alexandria to Cordale Housing Association Ltd on terms and conditions agreeable to both parties.
- 8672 On a vote being taken, 2 Members voted for the amendment and 6 for the motion which was accordingly declared carried.
- 8673 Thereafter, Councillor Agnew thanked all Officers for their input.

ADJOURNMENT

- 8674 The meeting was adjourned at this point and resumed a short time thereafter, with all Members on the Sederunt present.
- 8675 Thereafter, Councillor Flynn, Spokesperson for Housing introduced Ms Janice Lockhart, Section Head, Homelessness Service (present for this item only) and invited her to address the Committee on the Homelessness Service's recent Chartermark achievement.
- 8676 In response, Ms Lockhart informed the Committee that it was hoped that the Service could build on the achievement of Chartermark to continually improve the Homelessness Service.
- 8677 Councillor Agnew, on behalf of the Committee, congratulated Ms Lockhart and her team on the achievement of Chartermark.

HOUSING AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT STATISTICAL INFORMATION

- 8678 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services providing an update on Housing and Council Tax Benefit performance to the end of December 2005.
- 8679 The Committee agreed to note the continuing improvement in Housing and Council Tax Benefit Performance.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION: WAITING LIST, VOIDS, LETS & HOMELESS

- 8680 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services providing statistical information in relation to the waiting list for West Dunbartonshire Council houses, the reasons for termination of tenancies and the void and lets position as at 24 February 2006.
- 8681 After discussion and having heard Ms Caldwell, Manager of Housing Operations, in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) that the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services be requested to prepare a further report for consideration at the meeting of the Social Justice Committee to be held on 14 June 2006 to provide information on the reasons for the increase in homelessness applications;
 - (2) that details of the number of properties demolished would be provided to Councillor Bollan direct; and

- (3) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

CASH COLLECTION FACILITY – DUMBARTON AREA HOUSING OFFICE

8682 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services seeking approval for the closure of the cash collection facility at Dumbarton Area Housing Office, College Way, Dumbarton.

8683 After discussion, Councillor Flynn, seconded by Councillor Rooney, moved:-

8684 That the Committee agrees:-

(1) to approve the closure of the cash collection office based in the Area Housing Office at College Way, Dumbarton; and

(2) to approve that the closure takes place from 19 May 2006.

8685 As an amendment, Councillor McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor Bolan, moved:-

8686 That the cash collection office based in the Area Housing Office at College Way, Dumbarton does not close until officers have examined all issues raised in relation to provision of a public service and accessibility to the public. Until all issues raised are examined it would be inappropriate to close the Area Housing Office at College Way, Dumbarton.

8687 On a vote being taken, 2 Members voted for the amendment and 6 for the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

LOCK UP REVIEW

8688 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services seeking approval to demolish 198 lock ups across West Dunbartonshire.

8689 After discussion and having heard the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services in explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

(1) to approve the demolition of the lock ups shown in the Appendix to the Director's report;

(2) to approve the suspension of allocations to the properties shown in the Appendix to the Director's report; and

- (3) that the lock ups at Steven Street and Rose Street be considered for demolition now rather than as part of the Community Ownership Programme.

PROPOSED T-MOBILE INSTALLATION

- 8690 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services providing information on an enquiry received from T-Mobile UK Ltd for permission to conduct a survey in the Mountblow area of Clydebank for the purpose of identifying, acquiring and building telecommunications installations.
- 8691 Councillor Flynn, seconded by Councillor McNair, moved that the Committee agree to grant the request from Messrs Stappard Howes on behalf of their client T-Mobile UK Ltd to undertake a telecommunications survey of local residents.
- 8692 As an amendment Councillor McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor Bolla, moved:-
- 8693 That the request from Messrs Stappard Howes on behalf of their client T-Mobile UK Ltd to undertake a telecommunications survey be refused on the grounds that telecommunications installations should not be permitted on or near residential accommodation.
- 8694 On a vote being taken, 2 Members voted for the amendment and 6 for the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

AUDIT SCOTLAND – DRAFT REVIEW OF TRADING ACCOUNTS 2004/2005

- 8695 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services providing information on the recent actions taken by Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services to complete the department's input to the corrective action plan developed to address the issues raised by Audit Scotland in their Draft Report on the Review of Trading Accounts.
- 8696 Having heard Councillor Flynn, Service Spokesperson for Housing Services, the Committee agreed to note the update to the Housing Maintenance Trading Account Business Plan in the form of Action Place Appendix to the original documentation.

2005/2006 HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE

- 8697 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services providing an update on the progress made against those specific HRA Capital budgets where the Director of Housing and Technical Services was given delegated authority to identify projects in consultation with the Housing Convener.
- 8698 Having heard Councillor Flynn, Service Spokesperson for Housing Services, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 8699 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services providing information on the performance of areas within the housing service. The report contained information on Statutory Performance Indicators for the third quarter of 2005/2006 and the Department's programme of Best Value Reviews for the housing service.
- 8700 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

HOUSE SALES

- 8701 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services providing information on West Dunbartonshire Council houses sold under the Right to Buy scheme between 1 April 2005 and 28 February 2006.
- 8702 Having heard Councillor Flynn, Service Spokesperson for Housing Services, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR SURVEY

- 8703 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services providing information on the results of an anti-social behaviour survey carried out in September 2005.
- 8704 Having heard Councillor Flynn, Spokesperson for Housing Services, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR: STRATHCLYDE POLICE

- 8705 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services seeking approval to provide Scottish Executive anti-social behaviour funding to Strathclyde Police to support initiatives to tackle anti social behaviour.

8706 After discussion and having heard the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services in explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that a payment of £100,000 be made to Strathclyde Police from Scottish Executive grant funding for tackling anti-social behaviour; and
- (2) that regular monitoring reports would be presented to the Social Justice Committee.

FOLLOW UP REVIEW OF HOUSING RENTS SYSTEM

8707 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services advising of the progress being made in addressing the issues raised by Audit Scotland in their audit of the Housing Rents System.

8708 The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note that the testing of the interface was now complete and the interface would be operational from the beginning of the new financial year; and
- (2) to note that this now completed the last remaining recommendation contained within Audit Scotland's Follow Up Review of the Housing Rents System.

HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2005/2006 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 15 MARCH 2006 (PERIOD 11)

8709 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services advising on the progress of the HRA Capital Programme 2005/2006.

8710 After hearing the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the projected overspend of £0.602m as referred to in paragraph 3.10 and detailed in Appendix C of the Director's report;
- (2) to approve the budget virement as referred to in paragraph 3.10 and detailed in Appendix C of the Director's report; and
- (3) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

- 8711 In relation to a point raised by Councillor McLaughlin concerning the presentation of the report, it was noted that officers would endeavour to simplify future financial reports.

Note: Councillor Bollan left the meeting during consideration of this item.

UPGRADE OF INTEGRATED HOUSING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- 8712 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services seeking approval for the purchase of software to upgrade the current Integrated Housing Management System.
- 8713 Following discussion and having heard the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services and the Manager of Finance, Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services, the Committee agreed to the purchase of an upgrade to Saffron Version 6b of the Integrated Housing Management System.

The meeting closed at 12.38 a.m.