

HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Housing, Environment & Economic Development Committee held in the Education Centre, St. Margaret of Scotland Hospice, East Barns Street, Clydebank on Wednesday, 2 November 2011 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Jim Bollan, Jim Brown, Geoff Calvert, Gail Casey, William Hendrie, David McBride, Jonathan McColl, Jim McElhill and Willie McLaughlin.

Attending: Elaine Melrose, Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development; Ronald Dinnie, Head of Neighbourhood Services; Jim McAloon, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development; Helen Turley, Head of Housing and Community Safety; Jamie Dockery, Strategy Officer; Michael Gill, Employability Manager; Joe Reilly, Section Head (Resources); Sally Michael, Principal Solicitor and Nuala Quinn-Ross, Committee Officer, Legal, Democratic and Regulatory Services.

Apology: An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Craig McLaughlin.

Councillor William Hendrie 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 the Meeting of Committee held on 7 September 2011 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

PRESENTATION - CONSULTATIVE DRAFT WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2011 – 2016

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing information on the draft of the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) which is currently out to consultation and is scheduled to be submitted to the Scottish Government at the end of November 2011.

Following a presentation by the Strategy Officer and subsequent discussion and having heard the Strategy Officer in elaboration and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the content of the presentation on the Consultative Draft West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy 2011 - 2016;
- (2) that authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development to submit a final version of the Consultative Draft of the West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy to the Scottish Government by the end of November 2011, having regards to further comments made in the consultation exercise; and
- (3) to note that the submitted final Local Housing Strategy would be reported to the Committee at its January 2012 meeting.

WINTER MAINTENANCE STRATEGY – 2011/12

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development:-

- (1) providing information on the Council's statutory obligations under Section 34 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984; and
- (2) seeking approval of the Winter Maintenance Strategy - 2011/12, a copy of which was provided as the appendix to the report.

Following discussion and having heard officers in response to Members' questions, Councillor Bollan, seconded by Councillor McBride moved:-

That the Committee agree:-

- (1) that the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development be authorised to provide assistance to Transerve and Amey Highways, if requested, to keep the A82 Trunk Road open during severe weather;
- (2) that the Winter Housing Strategy be amended to provide that footways / footpaths are given the same service as roads, with the priorities spread over 24 hours;
- (3) that a report be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee on the financial implications of this change; and
- (4) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

As an amendment, Councillor McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor McColl moved:-

That the Committee agree:-

- (1) that the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development be authorised to provide assistance to Transerve and Amey Highways, if requested, to keep the A82 Trunk Road open during severe weather;
- (2) that the Winter Housing Strategy be amended to ensure that an enhanced out of hours service for footways / footpaths would be provided in exceptionally bad weather;
- (3) that a report would be brought back to Council or Committee if any changes were to be made to the Winter Maintenance Strategy due to national requirements or recommendations before said changes were implemented; and
- (4) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

On a vote being taken, 5 Members voted for the amendment and 4 for the motion. Accordingly the amendment was declared carried.

HOUSING, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENTAL PLAN 2011-15 - MID YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development setting out the Department's progress in meeting corporate and departmental objectives in the first year of the Housing, Environmental and Economic Development Departmental Plan 2011-15.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

REVIEW OF MILTON VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development:-

- (1) providing an update on the review of the Milton Visitor Information Centre;
- (2) providing details of the examination of available options identified for providing an alternative delivery for visitor services; and
- (3) seeking approval in relation to the recommended options to be taken forward in 2012/13.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to continue to support VisitScotland in delivery of tourism information services; and

- (2) that the Economic Development Manager investigate the potential of establishing a visitor information point at Auchentoshan Distillery for 2012/13.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2011-2016 PROGRESS REPORT

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing information on the Council's progress towards the actions in the Economic Development Strategy Action Plan 2011-2016 approved by the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee in April 2011.

Following discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development and the Employability Manager in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that six monthly updates continue to be brought before Committee;
- (2) that the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development make a request to the Chief Executive that a report providing information on the Council's policy on employability support be brought to Council or the appropriate service Committee; and
- (3) otherwise to note the contents of the report and the progress made in implementing the Economic Development Strategy Action Plan.

SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development advising of the forthcoming introduction of the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the current position with regard to the development of the Scottish Social Housing Charter; and
- (2) that the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development would submit a report on the progress made on the introduction of the Scottish Housing Charter to Committee before April 2012.

CASTLEHILL REGENERATION PLANS

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development seeking approval to facilitate and progress the regeneration of Castlehill, Dumbarton by declaring a further 34 properties as surplus stock.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to class the properties at 1, 3, 5 & 7 Carrick Terrace and 72, 78, 84, 90 & 96 Hawthornhill Road as surplus stock;
- (2) that the void properties shown in Appendix 1 to the report be kept unoccupied because they are surplus to requirements;
- (3) that any subsequent void properties within the locations shown in Appendix 1 to the report be kept unoccupied because they are surplus to requirements;
- (4) that the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development be authorised to begin negotiations with the remaining tenants; and
- (5) that a progress report be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

NEW COUNCIL HOUSE BUILDING - INNOVATION AND INVESTMENT FUND

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development advising of the Council's recent successful application made to the Scottish Government's Innovation and Investment Fund which secured funding of £2,250,000 to contribute to the building of 75 new council homes for rent in West Dunbartonshire.

Following discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development, the Head of Housing and Community Safety and the Strategy Officer in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to thank all staff involved in the submission of the three bids;
- (2) to note the content of the report and the successful funding application which has resulted in the Council receiving £2,250,000 funding to provide 75 new council homes for rent in West Dunbartonshire; and
- (3) that a further report providing information on timescales and the progress of the new Council House Build Project would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2008 - 2013 PROGRESS UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development advising of the progress the Council has made towards achieving the aims and objectives of the West Dunbartonshire Homelessness

Strategy 2008-2013 and the Scottish Government's Homelessness target that by December 2011 all unintentionally homeless households will have a right to settled accommodation.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress made to date towards achieving the aims and objectives of West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013;
- (2) to note that West Dunbartonshire Council has achieved the Scottish Government's homelessness target some two years in advance and to congratulate the Council's Homelessness Section on this achievement; and
- (3) that the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development be authorised to continue to work with partner agencies to implement the strategy and secure the outcomes as defined in the strategy.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COMMON HOUSING REGISTER "HOMESearch" PROGRESS REPORT

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing an update on progress in the development of the Common Housing Register (CHR) in partnership with local Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development and the Head of Housing and Community Safety in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress to date in the development of the CHR for West Dunbartonshire; and
- (2) that a further report setting out the timescales for the implementation of a CHR in West Dunbartonshire would be brought to the January meeting of the Committee.

HOMELESS TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development:-

- (a) providing information on the future provision of homeless temporary accommodation; and
- (b) seeking approval to develop additional supported accommodation to meet the increasing demand from homeless households.

Following discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development and the Head of Housing and Community Safety in answer to Members questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the development of the pilot project at 28 Ashton View, Dumbarton;
- (2) that, in consultation with local communities, officers investigate other possible locations for further supported/hostel accommodation projects; and
- (3) that a further report outlining a temporary accommodation strategy for West Dunbartonshire to meet the challenges facing the service be brought to Committee in early 2012.

Councillor Bollan, having failed to obtain a seconder for a proposed motion, asked that his dissent be recorded in respect of this item.

HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2012/15

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing an update on the progress that has been made in longer term Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital planning.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the three year programme of work set out in the report;
- (2) to the implementation of the procurement strategy set out in section 3.5 of the report;
- (3) to the continuation of the existing Measured Term Contract (MTC) arrangement with the Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) until 30 June 2015, in the form of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) coupled with a robust value for money regime; and
- (4) to note that reports would be provided to future meetings of the Council in relation to capital budgets and planning.

Note: Councillor McBride left the meeting during discussion of this item.

HOUSING MAINTENANCE TRADING ACCOUNT - BENEFITS GENERATED TO HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT FOLLOWING SETTING OF 5% OPERATING SURPLUS TARGET

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development advising of the options and consultation proposed regarding

the benefits generated to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) following the Council decision to set operating surplus target for the Housing Maintenance Trading Account at 5% of turnover with effect from 1 April 2012.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) that specific proposals on utilisation of the financial benefit form part of the HRA budget proposals (capital and revenue) for 2012/13; and
- (2) to otherwise note the contents of the report.

CORPORATE PLAN 2010/14 YEAR END PROGRESS REPORT - FURTHER INFORMATION ON THOSE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS ASSIGNED TO HOUSING, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WHICH SIGNIFICANTLY MISSED THEIR TARGETS

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing further details on the Department's six performance indicators (PIs) in the Corporate Plan 2010/14 year end progress report which significantly missed their targets i.e. where the status was reported as red.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL – ROADS, FLEET AND OPEN SPACE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLANS

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development seeking the approval of three Asset Management Plans which cover the Council's Fleet, Open Space and Roads Assets aligned to future service delivery over the next 10 years and seeking approval for these strategies.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the Roads, Fleet and Open Space Asset Management Plans;
- (2) that the Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development be authorised to ensure the effective implementation of the Asset Management Plans;
- (3) to note that any future reports on key projects outlined within the Asset Management Plans would be brought to the Committee for consideration;
- (4) that detailed action plans would be presented to a future meeting of the Committee; and
- (5) to note that the impact of these plans requires to be assessed and reflected in the Council's long term financial plans.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2011//2012 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2011 (PERIOD 6)

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing an update on the financial performance of the Housing, Environmental and Economic Development Department to 30 September 2011 (Period 6).

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the reduction in anticipated capital receipts;
- (2) to note the likely slippage in the capital programme; and
- (3) to note the position to date as outlined in Appendices B and C of the report.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2011/2012 – BUDGETARY CONTROL STATEMENT TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2011 (PERIOD 6)

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing an update on the financial performance of the Housing Revenue (HRA) to the period ended 30 September 2011 (Period 6).

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

HOUSING CAPITAL ACCOUNT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2011/2012 – BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2011 (PERIOD 6)

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing information on the progress of the HRS Capital Programme 2011/2012 and to allow the Committee to monitor performance.

Following discussion and having heard the Section Head (Resources) in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

CHAIR'S REMARKS

The Chair, Councillor Hendrie, invited the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development to provide a verbal update on a potential housing investment opportunity.

The Executive Director then explained that discussions were ongoing with Cordale Housing Association in relation to an application submitted by the Association to the Scottish Government which had the potential to support delivery of approximately 350 affordable homes for rent across West Dunbartonshire.

The Committee noted that discussions had revolved around a number of sites within the Scottish Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) as well as other potential sites not currently included within the SHIP and that the Association were continuing to pursue their proposals with the Scottish Government.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to acknowledge the opportunities provided by the proposals;
- (2) that the Executive Director continue discussions with Cordale Housing Association; and
- (3) that a report on the proposals and associated issues related to possible site disposals be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

The meeting closed at 11.46 a.m.