

HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Housing, Environment & Economic Development Committee held in Meeting Room 3, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 7 May 2008 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Jim Bollan, Jim Brown, Geoff Calvert, Gail Casey, William Hendrie, Jonathan McColl, Craig McLaughlin, Willie McLaughlin and Marie McNair.

Attending: Elaine Melrose, Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development; Ronnie Dinnie, Head of Land and Environment; Irving Hodgson, Head of Housing & Regeneration Services; John McKerracher, Head of Property and Technical Services; Alasdair Gregor, Planning Services Manager; Kevin Neeson, Manager of Development Services; Jeff Stobo, Manager of Strategy; Margaret Caldwell, Manager of Housing Operations; Donald Findlay, Manager of Estates and Technical Services; Angus Bodie, Manager of Roads, Waste and Transport; Stephen McGonagle, Manager of Repairs and Maintenance; Stephen Brown, Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services; Nigel Ettles, Principal Solicitor and Craig Stewart, Committee Officer, Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services.

Apology: An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Jim Finn.

Councillor William Hendrie in the Chair

VALEDICTORY – IRVING HODGSON

The Chair, Councillor Hendrie, informed the Committee that this would be the last meeting which Irving Hodgson, Head of Housing and Regeneration Services, would attend as he would shortly be retiring from Council service on 16 May 2008.

Councillor Hendrie, on behalf of the Committee, expressed his appreciation for the help and advice that Mr. Hodgson had given throughout his time with West Dunbartonshire Council and extended his very best wishes to him for the future.

The Committee concurred with Councillor Hendrie's remarks.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee held on 5 March 2008 were submitted and approved as a correct record

OWNERSHIP, MOORINGS AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES CONCERNING THE RIVER LEVEN

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Corporate Services providing an update with regards to the ownership, moorings and development issues concerning the River Leven.

A presentation was then given by the Head of Legal, Administrative & Regulatory Services and the Manager of Roads, Waste & Transport on the various issues involved concerning the River Leven. Following the presentation, a short question and answer session took place.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the terms of the discussion that had taken place in respect of this matter;
- (2) to note the position with regard to the title situation and the issues involved with regard to ownership, etc. as listed in the Appendix to the report; and
- (3) that a comprehensive report, taking into account the views of Members expressed at the Presentation and also the advice of Counsel, would be submitted to the next Meeting of the Committee on 6 August 2008.

DUMBARTON TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN

(a) Deputation

In terms of Standing Order No. 14, the Committee agreed to receive a presentation from Mr. R. Armstrong and Ms. J. Barnes of Dumbarton People's Theatre (DPT) in connection with the above. The representatives of DPT were then heard in elaboration of their concerns in respect of this matter.

After discussion and having heard Ms. Barnes in answer to Members' questions, the Chair, Councillor Hendrie, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Mr. Armstrong and Ms. Barnes for their informative presentation.

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

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 5 March 2008 (Page 925 refers), a report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development advising of further communication with

Business for Dumbarton and Dumbarton People's Theatre, with regards to the final draft of the Dumbarton Town Centre Master Plan following continuation of the item and seeking approval and adoption of the Dumbarton Town Centre Master Plan as Supplementary Planning Guidance as a strategy for the regeneration of the town centre.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the results from the public consultation, and further communication from Business for Dumbarton and Dumbarton People's Theatre and agree that the Denny Civic Theatre would not be demolished until such time as a new civic theatre, of an equivalent standard, was in place and operational in Dumbarton Town Centre; and
- (2) to refer further consideration of the report to the next meeting of the Council.

SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENTS

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive advising of the progress in developing West Dunbartonshire's Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) and requesting Members' comments on the new SOA by 30 May 2008.

The Committee agreed to provide any comments on the SOA templates by the requested deadline date of 30 May 2008.

HOUSING, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICE PLAN 2008 – 2012

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development seeking approval of the Housing, Environmental and Economic Development Service Plan 2008 – 2012.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, Councillor Bolla, seconded by Councillor Calvert, moved:-

That the Housing, Environmental and Economic Development Service Plan 2008 – 2012 be approved with the exception that the competitive tendering of Grounds Maintenance be deferred for a period of 12 months and then be reviewed after that time.

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

That the Committee approves the Housing, Environmental and Economic Development Service Plan 2008 – 2012 with the submission of a report to the next meeting of this Committee on the progress being made in relation to the competitive tendering of Grounds Maintenance.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to proceed by way of a roll call vote.

On a vote being taken, 4 Members voted for the amendment (namely Councillors Brown, Hendrie, McColl and C. McLaughlin) and 5 Members for the motion (namely Councillors Bolland, Casey, Calvert, W. McLaughlin and McNair).

The motion was accordingly declared carried.

CITIES GROWTH FUND 2008/09

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

- (a) informing of a proposal from Glasgow City Council to allocate £400,000 from its Scottish Government Capital Grant towards the implementation of the main priorities within the revised Metropolitan City Vision for area regeneration projects within the Canal Corridor and Riverside Regeneration; and
- (b) detailing the proposed project priorities and seeking approval for the Council to enter into contractual arrangements with Glasgow City Council to ensure appropriate audit trail and performance reporting.

After discussion and having heard the Head of Housing & Regeneration in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the allocation of £400,000 from the Cities Growth Fund 2008/09 for West Dunbartonshire;
- (2) that £200,000 be allocated to upgrade the Canal towpath between Clydebank town centre and Dalmuir Drop Lock and, if possible, canal bridge lighting at Kilbowie Road and Argyll Road;
- (3) to remit to the Council Meeting in May 2008, consideration on whether £200,000 be allocated to improving and enhancing the car-parking provision in Dumbarton town centre at Station Road and/or Strathleven Place, Dumbarton; and
- (4) that authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development to enter into contractual arrangements with Glasgow City Council to ensure appropriate audit trail and performance reporting.

ENVIRONMENTAL CAPITAL BUDGET 2008 – 2009

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development informing on the proposed programme of environmental projects in 2008/2009 and seeking authority for the allocation of funds to undertake the projects listed.

After discussion, Councillor C. McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor McColl, moved:-

That the proposed programme of capital projects detailed in the report be approved subject to the budgetary allocation to the Enviro Squad being revisited by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development, with a view to increasing the funding from £16,000 to £20,000.

As an amendment, Councillor Calvert, seconded by Councillor Casey, moved:-

That the Committee agrees to support the proposed programme of capital projects through the following:-

- (1) £16,000 for the Enviro Squad;
- (2) £34,000 for Greenspace and Environmental Education;
- (3) £10,000 for Woodland Management & Nature Conservation; and
- (4) £30,000 for Access & Environmental Improvements.

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

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING GRANT

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development informing of the offer of grant from the Scottish Government for private sector housing grant for 2008/09 and recommending how this funding should be allocated and prioritised.

After discussion and having heard the Head of Housing & Regeneration in answer to Members' questions, Councillor C. McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor McColl, moved:-

That the Committee agrees to note the content of this report and agree the allocations indicated in the table in paragraph 3.2 of the report.

As an amendment, Councillor Calvert, seconded by Councillor Casey, moved:-

That the Committee approves the proposed allocations indicated in the table in paragraph 3.2 of the report subject to the proposed allocations of costs relating to House Condition Survey (£63,000) and training costs associated with the Implementation of the new requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act (£10,000) being transferred to the General Services account, in order to address the issues of backlog of repairs, etc.

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

DEMOLITION OF LOCK-UP GARAGES AT BARWOODHILL, BELLSMYRE

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development advising of the decision which had been taken to demolish lock-up garages at Barwoodhill, Bellsmyre and seeking homologation of this decision.

The Committee agreed to homologate the decision taken by officers to demolish lock-up garages at Barwoodhill, Bellsmyre, in the interests of public safety.

SPORTS UNITED – A PROGRAMME OF SPORTING ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS WITH, OR AFFECTED BY, DISABILITIES

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development informing of the development of Sports United (formerly Youth United), a programme of sporting activities for adults and young people with, or affected by, disabilities.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the development of a programme of sporting activities for people with, or affected by, disabilities; and
- (2) to thank officers for their dedication and commitment in delivering this worthwhile initiative.

SPT TRANSPORTATION FUNDING 2008/2009

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development advising of the recent award of grant funding totalling £340,000 from Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) and giving details of the projects to be undertaken.

After discussion and having heard the Manager of Roads, Waste and Transport in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the award of grant and the projects listed, selected and approved by SPT.

ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT WORKS PROGRAMME 2008/2009

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development seeking approval for the proposed programme of road infrastructure improvement works to be undertaken during 2008/2009.

After discussion and having heard the Head of Land and Environment in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the road infrastructure improvement programme 2008/09 as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (2) that authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development to take appropriate action in the event of the programme being delayed as a consequence of public utility operations and/or adverse weather conditions.

CYCLING, WALKING AND SAFER STREETS PROJECT 2008/2009

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development seeking approval to undertake the list of schemes attached to the report which would be specifically targeted at improving the provision for cycling and walking within West Dunbartonshire.

After discussion and having heard the Head of Land and Environment in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to approve the undertaking of the projects detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

VEHICLE REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME – 2008/2009

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development seeking approval to purchase Council vehicles through the Scotland Excel (formerly Authorities Buying Consortium – ABC) framework agreements and, where required, to initiate tendering procedures for vehicles/plant which are not available through the framework agreements.

After discussion, it was agreed:-

- (1) to approve the Vehicle Replacement Programme 2008/09;
- (2) that authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development to purchase vehicles through the Scotland Excel framework agreement(s) or by a West Dunbartonshire Council tender, whichever is most appropriate and economically advantageous to the Council; and
- (3) that a briefing note be sent to all Members of the Committee and, if on receipt of the briefing note, Members request a presentation, a presentation will be given to Members at a future meeting of the Committee.

UPDATE ON PROPOSED UPGRADE OF HOUSING REPAIRS DEPOT AT COCHNO STREET, CLYDEBANK

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing an update on the proposal to upgrade the Housing Repairs Depot at Cochno Street, Clydebank and advising of the requirement to carry out essential business critical and health and safety works.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to acknowledge the critical role that the Cochno Street depot plays in the delivery of an effective Housing Repairs Service;
- (2) to approve the business critical and health and safety investments required and that they be progressed as a matter of urgency;
- (3) to approve the wider refurbishment of the Cochno Street depot as outlined in section 2 of the report; and
- (4) to authorise expenditure for the project from within the 2008/09 HRA Capital Plan Budget.

KITCHEN INSTALLATION STATISTICAL REPORT

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing information on progress with the kitchen programme 2007/2008 including installations completed on a Ward by Ward basis.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

HOUSE SALES

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing information on West Dunbartonshire Council houses sold under the Right to Buy scheme between 1 April 2007 and 29 February 2008. It was noted that the Appendix to the report gave details of houses sold by type and by area, together with information for the financial year 2006/07 for comparison purposes.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report and instructed the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development to prepare a report for a future meeting of this Committee on the subject of housing debt.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION: WAITING LISTS, VOIDS, LETS AND HOMELESS

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing statistical information in relation to the waiting list for West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) houses, the reasons for termination of tenancies and the void and lettings position as at 31 March 2008.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY REVIEW UPDATE

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing an update on the progress made in improving domestic energy efficiency over the last two years as described in the appended Fifth HECA (Home Energy Conservation Act) Progress Report 2005 – 2007.

After discussion and having heard the Head of Property and Technical Services in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the success in reducing energy use and carbon dioxide emissions, thus reducing household fuel bills; and
- (2) to approve the Fifth HECA Progress Report for publication and formal submission to the Scottish Government.

SALE OF FORMER HILLPARK RESIDENTIAL UNIT, 62 STEWART DRIVE, HARDGATE

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development seeking approval to sell the vacant former Hillpark Residential Unit at 62 Stewart Drive, Hardgate on the open market for residential purposes.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) that the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development be authorised to sell the vacant property at 62 Stewart Drive, Hardgate on the open market with a closing date for residential purposes; and
- (2) that authority be delegated to the Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services to conclude the transaction subject to such legal conditions that are considered appropriate.

SALE OF VACANT FIRST AND SECOND FLOOR PREMISES AT 102 MAIN STREET, ALEXANDRIA

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development seeking approval to sell the vacant first and second floor premises at 102 Main Street, Alexandria on the open market for residential purposes.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) that the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development be authorised to sell the vacant first and second floor premises at 102 Main Street, Alexandria on the open market subject to a closing date for residential purposes; and
- (2) that authority be delegated to the Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services to conclude the transactions subject to such legal conditions that are considered appropriate.

The meeting closed at 12.17 p.m.