

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Social Justice Committee held in the Council Chambers, Clydebank Town Hall, Dumbarton Road, Clydebank on Wednesday, 10 November 2004 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Denis Agnew, Dennis Brogan, James Flynn, Douglas McAllister, Linda McColl and Martin Rooney.

Attending: Alexis Jay, Director of Social Work Services; David McMillan, Director of Housing and Technical Services; Bill Clark, Head of Strategy; Cy Neil, Head of Housing Services; Jim Pow, Finance Manager and Craig Stewart, Administrative Assistant.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Jim Bolland, Margaret McGregor, Marie McNair and Andy White.

APPOINTMENT OF CONVENER

4128 Councillor Flynn advised that due to a rotation of the Conveners of Council Committees, the Committee would require to appoint a new Convener.

4129 The Administrative Assistant requested nominations for the position of Convener and the Committee unanimously agreed that Councillor Rooney be appointed Convener of the Social Justice Committee. Accordingly, Councillor Rooney assumed the chair.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4130 The Minutes of the Meeting of the Social Justice Committee held on 8 September 2004 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

REVIEW OF ROSSHEAD LETTING INITIATIVE

4131 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 8 September 2004 (Page 1061, paragraph 3535 refers), the Committee gave further consideration to the Rosshead Letting Initiative including representations from the Rosshead Estate Action Group who had been invited to attend this meeting.

4132 In this connection, the Committee heard Mrs. Miller, one of the representatives of the Rosshead Estate Action Group, in support of the letting initiative.

4133 After discussion and having heard Councillor Flynn, Service Spokesperson for Housing Services, and the local Member, Councillor McLaughlin, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note that with regard to paragraph 3535 (part (6) refers) of the Minutes of the last Meeting, there had been insufficient time to prepare a report on the legal position of the Rosshead Letting Initiative and that a report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee in relation to this matter; and
- (2) otherwise, to continue consideration of this matter until the legal position of the initiative was clarified, including any guidance on how possible conflicts with Section 106 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 could be resolved.

4134 At this point in the proceedings, the Convener, Councillor Rooney, thanked Councillor McLaughlin and the representatives of the Rosshead Estate Action Group for their attendance and, thereafter, all left the meeting.

LENDER OF LAST RESORT – HOME LOAN PORTFOLIO

4135 In terms of the remit from the Minutes of Meeting of the Corporate Services Committee held on 22 September 2004 (Page 1086, paragraph 3626 refers), the relevant excerpt minute and report were submitted by the Director of Corporate Services advising of the current valuation of the home loan portfolio and the potential sale value and making recommendations thereon.

4136 After hearing Councillor Flynn, Service Spokesperson for Housing Services, the Committee agreed that the Council should remain as the Lender of Last Resort and that no decision be taken in terms of selling the existing Home Loan Portfolio.

RACE EQUALITY SCHEME PROGRESS

4137 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive informing on the progress of West Dunbartonshire Council's Race Equality Scheme and outlining the Race Equality Action Plan for 2004/2005.

4138 The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to acknowledge the progress made to date on the delivery of the Race Equality Action Plan; and
- (2) to approve the new Action Plan to 2005.

**SOCIAL WORK BUDGETARY POSITION 2004/05 AS AT PERIOD
4 TO 15 AUGUST 2004**

- 4139 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work Services advising of the performance of the Social Work budget for the period to 15 August 2004. It was noted that two appendices had been omitted from the report and these were circulated at the meeting.
- 4140 Having heard the Convener, Councillor Rooney, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to note the budget overspend of £373,530 in the Social Work budget as at 15 August 2004;
 - (2) that the Director of Social Work Services be instructed to review the Social Work budget with a view to addressing the overspend and bringing the budget balance into line; and
 - (3) that further reports on this matter would be submitted to future meetings of this Committee and the Audit and Performance Review Committee for Members' consideration.

DECLARATION OF NON-FINANCIAL INTEREST

- 4141 Councillor Rooney declared a non-financial interest in respect of the application from One Plus – One Parent Families referred to in the report on the following item of business and took no part in the Committee's deliberation or decision thereon.

SOCIAL WORK GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

- 4142 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work Services making recommendations on the level of grants payable to voluntary organisations.
- 4143 The Committee agreed to approve the recommendations in relation to the various applications detailed in the Appendix to the report, a copy of which is appended hereto, with the exceptions of the Thursday Stroke Club and Wheelyboat who would be awarded the amounts of £2,815 and £3,685 respectively.

SCOTTISH HEALTH AWARDS

- 4144 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work Services advising that two of the Council's Social Work Joint Services Teams have been nominated finalists in a national competition.

4145 After hearing the Convener, Councillor Rooney, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the report; and
- (2) that both teams be commended for their significant achievement in reaching the final stage of the Scottish Health Awards for 2004.

**HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2004/2005 – BUDGETARY CONTROL
REPORT TO 15 SEPTEMBER 2004 (PERIOD 5)**

4146 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services advising of the progress of the HRA Capital Programme to 15 September 2004.

4147 The Committee agreed to note the report.

**HOUSING – NON HRA REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGETARY CONTROL
STATEMENT 2004/2005 TO 15 SEPTEMBER 2004 (PERIOD 5)**

4148 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services informing on how key elements within the Housing – Non HRA Revenue Account are performing against budget for the period ended 15 September 2004 (Period 5).

4149 The Committee agreed to note the report.

**HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2004/2005 BUDGETARY CONTROL
STATEMENT TO 15 SEPTEMBER 2004 (PERIOD 5)**

4150 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services providing an update on the financial performance of the Housing Revenue Account for the period ended 15 September 2004 (Period 5).

4151 The Committee agreed to note the report.

**HOUSING MAINTENANCE TRADING OPERATION 2004/2005 –
FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE TO 15 SEPTEMBER 2004 (PERIOD 5)**

4152 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services presenting interim cumulative financial information for the period ending 15 September 2004 (Period 5).

4153 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

RENT HARMONISATION

4154 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services advising of the progress made in the introduction of the second stage of the rent harmonisation programme.

4155 The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the successful implementation of the second stage of the rent harmonisation programme;
- (2) that the third stage of the rent harmonisation programme be introduced in September 2005 and each September thereafter until harmonisation was complete;
- (3) that the increase be limited to £1.00 per week; and
- (4) that the Director of Housing and Technical Services be instructed to prepare regular progress reports on this matter for consideration at future meetings of the Committee.

VOIDS AND LETTINGS

4156 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services providing:-

- (1) details of void houses and their status as at 24 September 2004;
- (2) an analysis of void houses by type and by area as at 24 September 2004;
- (3) details of the number of void houses by Ward and by area as at 24 September 2004; and
- (4) an analysis of the number of void houses let for the period July to September 2004.

4157 Having heard the Head of Housing Services, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

HOUSING & COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT PERFORMANCE 2004/2005

4158 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services providing an update on the Housing and Council Tax Benefit performance to the end of September 2004.

4159 Having heard the Convener, Councillor Rooney, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the continued improvement in Housing and Council Tax Benefit Performance; and
- (2) to congratulate everyone involved for their significant achievement in reaching and exceeding the target.

WAITING LIST FOR WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL HOUSES

4160 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services providing a breakdown of the number of applicants on the waiting list for West Dunbartonshire Council houses and their present circumstances. In this respect, the information indicated the position as at 30 September 2004 and figures for the same period in 2003 were also provided for comparison.

4161 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

HOUSE SALES

4162 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services providing information on West Dunbartonshire Council houses sold under the Right to Buy scheme between 1 April and 30 September 2004.

4163 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

HOMELESSNESS STATISTICS

4164 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services providing statistical information on homelessness applications in West Dunbartonshire in the second quarter of financial year 2004/2005 (July to September 2004) and giving a comparison with the same quarter in the previous two years.

4165 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

The meeting closed at 10.25 a.m.