

HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee held in Committee Room 3, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 7 May 2014 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Jim Bollan, Gail Casey, William Hendrie, David McBride, Michelle McGinty, Marie McNair, Lawrence O'Neill, Tommy Rainey, Gail Robertson, Martin Rooney and Kath Ryall.

Attending: Richard Cairns, Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration; Helen Turley, Head of Housing and Community Safety; John Kerr, Housing Strategy Manager; Sally Michael, Principal Solicitor; and Nuala Quinn-Ross, Committee Officer, Legal, Democratic and Regulatory Services.

Apologies: An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor John Mooney.

Councillor David McBride in the Chair

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Gail Robertson declared a non financial interest in the item under the heading 'Lease of Land Comprising the Pier and Slipway at Balloch to the Loch Lomond Steamship Company', as a family member is a member on the Board of the Loch Lomond Steamship Company, at this point in the meeting.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

(a) Special Meeting held on 22 January 2014

The Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee held on 22 January 2014 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

(b) Ordinary Meeting held on 5 February 2014

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee held on 5 February 2014 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

(c) Special Meeting held on 26 February 2014

The Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee held on 26 February 2014 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

HOUSING, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC PLAN 2014 – 2018

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration seeking approval of the Housing, Environmental and Economic Development Strategic Plan 2014-2018, as detailed within Appendix 1 to the report.

Having heard the Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration and the Head of Housing and Community Safety in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the Housing, Environmental & Economic Development Departmental Plan 2014 -2018;
- (2) that the West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan be provided to Members;
- (3) officers investigate whether it was considered if the reduction of the frequency of office cleaning from 5 – 3 days would have a detrimental effect on allergy sufferers;
- (4) that the note of the staff workshops held during March 2014 and comments made by staff be provided to Members;
- (5) that a briefing note providing the performance figures, which were not previously available, be provided to Members once the figures become available;
- (6) that the full Employee Survey and comments received from staff be provided to Councillor Bollan;
- (7) that details of the current number of vacancies within the Housing, Environment and Economic Development department be provided to Members;
- (8) that further details be provided, if available, on reasons people have resigned;
- (9) that the People and Transformation Department be contacted to confirm whether exit interviews were being carried out when people leave the Council as a matter of course; and
- (10) that future reports could include reasons for people resigning, if the information is available.

DELIVERING NEW HOUSING IN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE – STRATEGIC HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration seeking approval for the establishment of a Strategic Housing Partnership.

On a query being raised by Councillor Rooney, the Principal Solicitor asked further details from Councillor Bollan as to whether he had any interest in two Housing Associations being the subject of his proposed amendment. Once clarified that Councillor Bollan was a tenant and not a member of either of the Housing Associations Board, the Principal Solicitor advised that in terms of the Councillors Code of Conduct Councillor Bollan would not require to declare an interest in this item of business.

Having heard the advice from the Legal Officer, Councillor Lawrence O'Neill declared an interest in this item of business, being a member of Knowes Housing Association Management Committee and Councillor Tommy Rainey declared an interest in this item of business, being a member of Dunbritton Housing Association Management Committee.

Having heard the Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration, the Head of Housing and Community Safety and the Housing Strategy Manager in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the assessment framework process used in assessing the Strategic Housing Partner Bidders;
- (2) that authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration to enter into discussions to develop a strategic housing partnership with the Wheatley Group to assist in the delivery of the Council's strategic housing objectives including new Registered Social Landlord housing for rent; and other affordable housing solutions; and
- (3) the use of the development sites approved within the West Dunbartonshire Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2013/18 and the development of the new Strategic Housing Investment Plan as a basis for the Partnership Agreement.

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

BUYING BACK EX-LOCAL AUTHORITY PROPERTIES PURCHASED THROUGH THE RIGHT TO BUY BUY-BACK SCHEME

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration providing details of the progress of the Buy Back Scheme since its implementation in October 2013.

Having heard the Housing Strategy Manager in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that updates be provided to the Housing and Community Committee on a regular basis as part of the reporting on Capital Programme monitoring framework; and
- (2) otherwise to note the content of the report.

PROPOSED ABOLITION OF THE RIGHT TO BUY IN SCOTLAND – DESIGNATION OF PRESSURED AREA STATUS

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration:-

- (a) advising that the Right to Buy in Scotland is scheduled to end when the Housing (Scotland) Bill is enacted in 2017 or sooner; and
- (b) seeking agreement that no further action be taken in introducing a Pressured Area Status designation within West Dunbartonshire.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note that the Right to Buy in Scotland is scheduled to end when the Housing (Scotland) Bill is enacted in 2017 or sooner;
- (2) to note the contents of the report; and
- (3) that no further action is to be taken on introducing a Pressured Area Status designation within West Dunbartonshire.

HOUSING ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2013-2018 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration informing on the progress made with the West Dunbartonshire Housing Asset Management Strategy since its approval on 13 February 2013.

Having heard the Head of Housing and Community Safety in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to acknowledge the progress made in meeting the aims and objectives of the West Dunbartonshire Housing Asset Management Strategy;
- (2) to note the contents of the West Dunbartonshire Housing Asset Management Strategy Annual Progress Report 2013; and

- (3) to note that a further annual progress report would be submitted to the Housing and Communities Committee in August 2015.

Note: Councillor Lawrence O'Neill left the meeting while Councillor McBride was introducing the above item.

COUNCIL HOUSE NEW BUILD PROGRESS REPORT

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration informing of the progress of the Council's new build house programme.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to the amendment to the unit capacity at the Hill Street development from 38 units to 37 units to facilitate a large wheelchair property to meet a specifically identified need;
- (2) to note the changes to the financial profile outlined in section 6.1, of the report, which have been adjusted to reflect the change in unit numbers;
- (3) to note the progress made to date with the Council's new build programme; and
- (4) otherwise, to note the content of the report.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY (PRIVATE SECTOR) 2014-2016

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration seeking approval and authority to implement West Dunbartonshire's first Empty Homes Strategy.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) the West Dunbartonshire's Empty Homes Strategy 2014-2016; and
- (2) that authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration to ensure the effective implementation of the strategy and associated action plan.

SILVERTON FLAT ROOFED PROPERTIES

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration:-

- (a) providing a detailed update on the issues regarding the defective housing properties in Silverton; and

- (b) seeking approval of the proposed future steps to address the ongoing issues.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to continue discussions with the Housing Minister and his officers, to seek assistance with the urgent and unforeseeable issues present in flat roofed properties in the Silverton area, as a circumstance which requires national intervention and financial support;
- (2) that, subject to reaching agreement on suitable terms with owner occupiers, Committee approval is given to proceed with plans for demolition of two blocks of houses;
- (3) to the introduction of the support package for owner occupiers and tenants directly affected as described in Section 4.14 of the report; and
- (4) to note that dependent on developments, a further report seeking appropriate solutions to the issues raised within the report, may be required in coming months.

Note: Councillor O'Neill returned to the meeting while Councillor McBride was introducing the above item.

LEASE OF LAND COMPRISING THE PIER AND SLIPWAY AT BALLOCH TO THE LOCH LOMOND STEAMSHIP COMPANY

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration seeking agreement to extend the lease of the Pier and Slipway at Balloch to the Loch Lomond Steamship Company (LLSC).

Having heard Councillor Rooney in relation to the length of the proposed extension of lease, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Infrastructure & Regeneration to extend the lease of the Pier and Slipway at Balloch to the Loch Lomond Steamship Company, for a further 35 years, from its termination date of 27 May 2032 to 27 May 2049; and
- (2) that authority be delegated to the Head of Legal, Democratic and Regulatory Services to conclude the lease extension subject to such legal conditions that are considered appropriate.

Note: Councillor Gail Casey left the meeting while Councillor McBride was introducing the above item.

HOUSING ALLOCATION REVIEW

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration seeking approval to establish a short life Member/Officer Working Group to assist in the review of the housing allocations policy.

Having heard the Head of Housing and Community Safety in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that a Member/Officer Working Group be established; and
- (2) that all Elected Members be invited to become members of the Member/Officer Group – Housing Allocation Review.

Note: Councillor Gail Casey returned to the meeting while Councillor McBride was introducing the above item.

The meeting closed at 3.03 p.m.