

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

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

Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee:
2 November 2011

Subject: West Dunbartonshire Common Housing Register “Homesearch” Progress Report

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on progress in the development of the Common Housing Register (CHR) in partnership with local Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

2. Background

- 2.1** At Housing, Environmental and Economic Development Committee on 2 September, 2009, it was agreed that progress on the development of the CHR would be a standing agenda item for future Committees.
- 2.2** Representatives from the Council and the RSLs established a CHR Project Board to facilitate the development of a CHR in West Dunbartonshire this group met regularly on a monthly basis until December 2010.
- 2.3** In addition, at the meeting of the Project Board in May 2010, the partners agreed to form an additional sub group to prepare a specification that would be used to tender for an ICT solution.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** The development of a CHR made good progress in West Dunbartonshire throughout 2010. However, the delivery of a West Dunbartonshire CHR stalled in the early 2011 due to series of unforeseen staffing factors within West Dunbartonshire Council.
- 3.2** These staffing factors have now been addressed, with the appointment of a new Policy Officer in August within Housing and Community Safety, who has responsibility for driving forward developments with regards the introduction of a CHR within West Dunbartonshire. In addition the Policy Officer has support from a number of other key officers within Housing and Community Safety services this has ensured that contingencies are in place should there be any repeat of previous staffing factors.

3.3 The CHR Project Board has now reconvened and meets on a monthly basis to drive forward the implementation of a West Dunbartonshire CHR. It has prioritised the following developmental issues to be actioned by the end of the financial year:-

- Development of a Draft Common Allocation Policy (January 2012)
- Develop and agree Common Housing Allocation Application Form (February 2012)
- Selection of a preferred provider for an IT solution for West Dunbartonshire CHR (March 2012)

3.4 West Dunbartonshire Council is committed to the development of a CHR and will drive forward a strong partnership for the establishment of a West Dunbartonshire CHR will benefit residents of the local authority area.

4. People Implications

4.1 A staff resource has been identified to ensure that all aspects of the project are progressed within the agreed timescales.

4.2 Additional support is being provided by the partner RSLs and from officers within Housing, Environmental and Economic Development.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 An indicative cost of £100,000 has been identified to develop a shared ICT solution. This is based on the costs incurred by other Local Authority areas who have implemented a CHR. The likely costs for the West Dunbartonshire CHR will be reported to a future Housing, Environmental and Economic Development Committee once the tender returns are fully evaluated and resourcing and training needs to take the project forward are identified.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 The development of the CHR has been identified as a key element in the drive for continuous improvement in the housing service. Maintaining the momentum in achieving a successful outcome on this project is therefore critical.

7. Equalities, health and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EIA)

7.1 An impact assessment is not required at this stage but will be required as the project develops.

8. Strategic Assessment

8.1 A strategic assessment will be undertaken on the development of a CHR and associated actions and will be presented as part of reports to be considered.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

9.1 The development of a comprehensive CHR facilitates ease of access to all social rented housing within the area.

9.2 It is recommended that the committee note:

- (i) the progress to date in the development of the CHR for West Dunbartonshire; and
- (ii) that a further report will be brought forward setting out the timescales for the implementation of a CHR in West Dunbartonshire to the January Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee.

Elaine Melrose

Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

Date: 3 October 2011

Persons to Contact: John Kerr - Housing Strategy Manager, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton, G82 3PU, telephone: 01389 737889, e-mail: john.kerr2@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Jennifer MacMahon - Policy Officer, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton, G82 3PU, telephone: 01389 737721, e-mail: jennifer.macmahon@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Appendix: None

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All