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, 6 April 2011 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Jim Bollan, Jim Brown, Geoff Calvert, William Hendrie, Jonathan McColl, Jim McElhill, William McLaughlin and John Millar.

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; Stuart Gibson, Acting Team Leader – Assets and Estates; Joe Reilly, Section Head (Resources); Sally Michael, Principal Solicitor; and Scott Kelly, Committee Officer, Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Gail Casey and Craig McLaughlin.

Councillor William Hendrie in the Chair

DECLARATION 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 Meeting of the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee held on 2 February 2011 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2011 – 2016

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development seeking approval for the West Dunbartonshire Council Economic Development Strategy Action Plan.

Having heard the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development in answer to a Member's question, the Committee agreed:-

(1) to approve the West Dunbartonshire Economic Development Strategy Action Plan;

(2) that authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development to deliver and implement the Economic Development Strategy Action Plan; and

(3) that reports on progress in implementing the action plan should be presented to the Committee every six months.

FORMER RENTON EARLY EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE CENTRE (EECC), STATION STREET, RENTON

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development outlining the process for progressing a motion to transfer the former Renton Early Education and Childcare Centre (EECC) to Renton Community Development trust (RCDT) at nil value or less than market value.

Following discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development, the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development, and the Acting Team Leader – Assets and Estates in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

(1) that the Estates Section be instructed to contact Renton Community Development Trust (RCDT) and other community organisations in the Vale of Leven area to seek expressions of interest in the property; and

(2) that an options appraisal should be carried out on the submissions received from interested groups which should be reported back to the September 2011 meeting of the Committee for consideration and approval of the proposed disposal, if appropriate.

ROAD SAFETY PLAN 2011 - 2020

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development on the success of the Council's second Road Safety Plan 2002 – 2010 and seeking agreement on the proposed draft Road Safety Plan 2011 – 2020.

The Committee agreed:-

(1) to approve the proposed Road Safety Plan; and

(2) that authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development to undertake the necessary consultation with interested parties and then to publish the Road Safety Plan 2011 - 2020.

A AND B CLASS ROADS SPEED LIMIT REVIEW

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development advising of the outcome of the A and B Class speed limit review and seeking approval to proceed following detailed consultation on the outcome of the review.

The Committee agreed:-

(1) to note the outcome of the speed review; and

(2) that authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development to undertake the necessary consultation, promotion of traffic regulation orders and improvement actions detailed within the A and B class speed review to improve road safety within West Dunbartonshire.

MANAGEMENT RULES FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

A report was submitted by the Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services providing an update on the position with regard to the current Management Rules for Parks and Open Spaces.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:-

(1) to note the terms of the report and the terms of the new legislation, the Control of Dogs (Scotland) Act 2010, to tackle the issue of persons who are not keeping proper control of dogs within parks and open spaces;

(2) to make no changes to the current Management Rules for Parks and Open Spaces that were previously updated in 2007; and

(3) that a report should be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee assessing the effectiveness of the new legislation in West Dunbartonshire.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL'S SERVICE PROVISION FOR SCOTTISH GYPSY TRAVELLERS

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development informing on the findings and recommendations of Amnesty International's recent research into West Dunbartonshire Council's record of service delivery to Scottish Gypsy Travellers.

It was noted that Appendix 2 to the report had not been included with the Committee papers which had been circulated to Members and there was submitted (tabled) a copy of the missing appendix.

After discusion and having heard the Head of Housing and Community Safety in explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, Councillor McElhill, seconded by Councillor Hendrie, moved:-

That the Committee agrees:-

(1) to note the findings of the research commissioned by Amnesty International on West Dunbartonshire Council's service provision for Scottish Gypsy Travellers;

(2) that authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development to explore opportunities to continue to improve service provision for Scottish Gypsy Travellers within West Dunbartonshire, including inviting members of the Gypsy Traveller Action Group to attend a meeting in order to take matters forward; and

(3) that a report on progress should be submitted to the December 2011 meeting of the Committee.

As an amendment, Councillor Bollan, seconded by Councillor Millar, moved:-

That the Committee agrees that the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development be instructed to appoint a Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officer who should revive the Gypsy Traveller Action Group as a means of consulting with the residents of the site at Dennystoun Forge.

On a vote being taken, 2 Members voted for the amendment and 5 for the motion which was accordingly declared carried.

INNOVATION AND INVESTMENT FUND

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development informing on the introduction of the Scottish Government's Innovation and Investment Fund.

Following 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 changes to new build affordable housing funding arrangements introduced through competitive grant funding arrangements in 2011/12;

(2) that authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development to work with partner housing providers to develop appropriate applications to the Innovation and Investment Fund to secure future provision of new supply social housing within West Dunbartonshire; and

(3) that a report on progress in securing funding through the Innovation and Investment Fund should be presented to a future meeting of the Committee.

HOUSING REGENERATION MASTERPLANS – IMPLICATIONS OF NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUND

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing an update to the Masterplan Report made to the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee on 2 February 2011 and outlining the potential impact of new Scottish Government housing policy and affordable housing funding arrangements.

After discussion, the Committee agreed:-

(1) to note the new funding position which directly affects the previously agreed course of action in respect of masterplan/feasibility study work;

(2) that authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development to ensure that liaison continues with communities in the regeneration areas over the declining budget and on what steps can be taken in mitigation, and to note that there would be further opportunities for consultation over priorities during the preparation of the Local Housing Strategy and Local Development Plan; and

(3) to continue with development of masterplans, as far as practicable, for all identified areas to ensure that plans are as well developed as possible to facilitate an effective response once future funding of housing investment becomes clearer.

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING GRANT FUNDING ALLOCATION 2011/12

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development seeking approval for the Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG), for 2011/12.

The Committee agreed the content of the report, including the proposed allocations indicated in the table in paragraph 3.4.

CARE AND REPAIR SERVICE TENDER

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development seeking approval to invite tenders for the provision of the Care and Repair service as part of the Council's Scheme of Assistance.

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

(1) approve the initiation of an open tendering procedure by the Council for provision of Care and Repair Services as part of the Scheme of Assistance funded by the Private Sector Housing Grant;

(2) that the current arrangements in place with Lomond Care and Repair should be formally extended by one year until the procurement process can be progressed, thus ensuring continuity of service; and

(3) that a briefing note should be issued to Members of the Housing, Environment and Economic Development and Tendering Committees outlining the critical stages in the tendering process for the provision of the Care and Repair service.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2010/2011 BUDGETARY CONTROL STATEMENT TO 28 FEBRUARY 2011 (PERIOD 11)

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 Account (HRA) to the period ended 28 February 2011.

Having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development and the Section Head (Resources) in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

(1) that a briefing note should be issued to Members of the Committee providing further information on the variance in employee costs; and

(2) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2010/2011 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 28 FEBRUARY 2011 (PERIOD 11)

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development advising on the progress of the HRA Capital Programme 2010/2011 and to allow the Committee to monitor performance.

The Commitee agreed to note the contents of the report.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2010/2011 TO 28 FEBRUARY 2011 (PERIOD 11)

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development providing an update on the financial performance of the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Department to 28 February 2011 (Period 11).

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR THE YEAR 2009/10

A report was submitted by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development on the above.

After discussion and having heard the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development and the Head of Neighbourhood Services in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to continue consideration of the report to the next meeting of the Committee in order to allow Members the opportunity to study its contents.

The meeting closed at 11.20 a.m.