

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Social Justice Committee held in the Council Chambers, Municipal Buildings, Station Road, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 14 April 2004 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Denis Agnew, James Flynn, Linda McColl, Margaret McGregor, Marie McNair, Martin Rooney and Andy White.

Attending: Alexis Jay, Director of Social Work and Housing Services; Bill Clark, Head of Strategy; Cy Neil, Head of Housing Services; Jim Pow, Manager of Resources; Tim Holmes, Capital Programme Officer, Housing Services; Margaret Caldwell, Section Head (Arrears, Benefits and Cash Control); Gavin Walsh, Solicitor and Craig Stewart, Administrative Assistant.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Jim Bolla, Dennis Brogan and Douglas McAllister.

Councillor James Flynn in the Chair

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

2441 The Minutes of the Meeting of the Social Justice Committee held on 11 February 2004 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE WORKING GROUP ON HATE CRIME – CONSULTATION PAPER

2442 A report was submitted by the Head of Legal and Administrative Services seeking views on the proposed response to the Scottish Executive's Working Group on Hate Crime Consultation Paper.

2443 Having heard Mr. Walsh, Solicitor, in elaboration, the Committee agreed:-

- (a) that the proposal to introduce legal measures to address offences motivated by hatred be welcomed; and
- (b) to endorse the proposed response on the basis outlined in the Appendix to the report.

CAFÉ CONNECT (SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES)

- 2444 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services advising of the opening of Café Connect.
- 2445 It was noted that Café Connect was based in Dumbarton Resource Centre which provided a day service for adults with a learning disability. In this regard, the café was a viable, and not for profit, organisation that would provide employment for eight adults with learning disabilities.
- 2446 After discussion, the Committee agreed to note that Café Connect opened to the public on 5 April 2004.

SOCIAL WORK GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

- 2447 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services making recommendations on the level of grants payable to voluntary organisations.
- 2448 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.

HRA CAPITAL BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT – PERIOD 11, 2003/04

- 2449 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services advising of the progress of the HRA Capital Programme to 29 February 2004.
- 2450 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGETARY POSITION 2003/04

- 2451 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services informing on how key elements within the Housing Revenue Account had performed against the projected outturn for the period ended 29 February 2004 (Period 11).
- 2452 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

HOUSING MAINTENANCE TRADING ACCOUNT AND WINDOW FACTORY FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE – 2003/04 PERIOD 11

- 2453 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services presenting interim cumulative financial information for the 11 months from 1 April 2003 to 29 February 2004 (Period 11).
- 2454 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

SOCIAL WORK AND HOUSING BUDGETARY POSITION 2003/04

- 2455 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services informing on how key elements within the Social Work and Housing Services (excluding HRA) Department had performed against probable outturn for the period ended 29 February 2004 (Period 11)
- 2456 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

VOIDS AND LETTINGS

- 2457 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services providing:-
- (a) details of void figures at week ending 28 February 2004;
 - (b) an analysis of voids at week ending 28 February 2004;
 - (c) details of the number of voids per ward at week ending 28 February 2004; and
 - (d) an analysis of lets for the period April 2003 to February 2004.
- 2458 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

HOMELESSNESS STATISTICS

- 2459 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services providing statistical information on homelessness applications in West Dunbartonshire for the period January to December 2003 and giving a comparison with the previous year.
- 2460 After discussion and having heard the Head of Housing Services, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

MYSTERY CUSTOMER SURVEY

2461 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services providing information on a Mystery Customer Survey which was conducted to assist in the monitoring and improvement of service standards at each of the three Area Housing Offices in Clydebank, Dumbarton and Alexandria.

2462 Having heard the Director of Social Work and Housing Services, the Committee agreed:-

- (a) to note the use of the mystery customer exercise which had been carried out during December 2003 using a variety of scenarios, both on the telephone and by personal visits; and
- (b) to note the outcomes of the survey as detailed in the report.

HOUSING & COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT PERFORMANCE

2463 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services providing an update on Housing and Council Tax Benefit performance to the end of December 2003.

2464 The Committee agreed to note the continued improvement in Housing and Council Tax Benefit Performance.

RENT ARREARS

2465 A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work and Housing Services providing an update on the rent arrears position to the end of February 2004.

2466 The Committee agreed to note the improvement in the arrears performance from the same period last year.

The meeting closed at 10.16 a.m.