

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Social Justice Committee held on Wednesday, 14 March 2007 in the Council Chambers, Clydebank Town Hall, Dumbarton Road, Clydebank at 11.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Denis Agnew, Dennis Brogan, Gail Casey, Linda McColl, Margaret McGregor, Craig McLaughlin, Marie McNair and Martin Rooney.

Attending: Irving Hodgson, Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services); John McKerracher; Head of Housing and Property Services; James Pow, Manager of Finance, Department of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services; Stephen West, Manager of Resources, Department of Social Work Services; Linda Hall, Section Head, Tenancy Services; Marion Smith, Section Head, Revenues; Martin McKendrick, Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator; Jeff Stobo, Manager of Strategy, Liz Cochrane, Principal Policy Officer; Sally Michael, Principal Solicitor and Nuala Borthwick, Administrative Assistant.

Also Attending: Gavin Paterson, Policy Liaison Officer to the Council, Strathclyde Police.

Apology: An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor James Flynn.

Councillor Marie McNair in the Chair

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Social Justice Committee held on 17 January 2007 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

THE GENDER EQUALITY DUTY

A report was submitted by the Chief Executive providing information on the Council's requirement to meet the Gender Equality Duty, which comes into force on 6 April 2007, and outlining the key areas of work necessary to meet this requirement.

Having heard the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) and the Principal Policy Officer in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to work towards the elimination of gender discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity between women and men;
- (2) to support the work of the Policy Unit in developing the Gender Equality Scheme through the Equality and Diversity Working Group;
- (3) that employees be given time to complete employee information checks and employee questionnaires; and
- (4) that employees willing to be involved in focus groups be given time to do so, without using flexi or other leave arrangements.

SOCIAL WORK BUDGETARY POSITION 2006/2007 AS AT PERIOD 9 TO 15 JANUARY 2007

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 January 2007.

It was noted that Appendices 1a and 1b issued with the papers were inaccurate and copies of the correct Appendices were circulated to Members' for information at the meeting.

Having heard the Manager of Resources in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

CARE COMMISSION INSPECTION REPORTS

A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work Services providing information on recent inspection reports received from the Care Commission including one Care Home for Older People, four Day Services for Older People and two Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities. All are managed by West Dunbartonshire Council and cover the period between July 2006 and December 2006.

Following discussion and having heard the Manager of Resources in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report and the attached summaries of the Care Commission inspection reports of the seven services inspected;

- (2) that the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) would provide information to Councillor McLaughlin on the costings for Health and Safety in the 2007/2008 capital plan in relation to the upgrade of the uneven pathways in the garden area at Frank Downie House; and
- (3) that staff be congratulated on the high standard of inspections reports received from the Care Commission.

TELECARE BID – SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work Services providing an update on West Dunbartonshire Council's bid for telecare funding from the Scottish Executive.

Having heard Councillor McGregor, Service Spokesperson for Social Work Services in further explanation of the report, the Committee agreed to note the updated position regarding the approval of the Telecare bid by the Scottish Executive.

Thereafter, Councillor Rooney, on behalf of the Committee, congratulated staff involved in putting together the bid for telecare funding from the Scottish Executive.

QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT – OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2006 – PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: SOCIAL WORK SERVICES FOR ADULTS AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT INFORMATION FOR ALL SOCIAL WORK

A report was submitted by the Director of Social Work Services providing information on:-

- (a) the performance of Social Work Performance Indicators for Services for Adults for the period of 1 October to 30 December 2006; and
- (b) on work being undertaken by the department on continuous improvement, including Best Value Reviews, Performance Development Planning, etc.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that a further detailed report on those improvement targets where targets will not be met or where performance, as measured for Statutory Performance Indicators, will be reduced from previous years be submitted to a future Committee meeting; and
- (2) otherwise to note the contents of the report

**HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2006/2007 BUDGETARY CONTROL
STATEMENT TO 15 JANUARY 2007 (PERIOD 9)**

A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) providing an update on the financial performance of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to the period ended 15 January 2007.

Having heard the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) carry out a service costing exercise to investigate the feasibility of re-introducing a greater static caretaker service in multi storey flats within West Dunbartonshire; and
- (2) to note the contents of the report.

**HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2006/2007 BUDGETARY CONTROL
REPORT TO 15 JANUARY 2007 (PERIOD 9)**

A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) advising of the progress of the HRA Capital Programme 2006/2007.

Having heard the Head of Housing and Property Services in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that officers review the procedures for determining the distribution of kitchens and bathrooms within the HRA Capital Programme in order that long standing tenants and the age of the houses are taken into account in future programmes and that the review be reported to a future meeting of the Committee; and
- (2) to note the contents of the report.

**HOUSING – NON HRA REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGETARY CONTROL
STATEMENT 2006/2007 TO 15 JANUARY 2007 (PERIOD 9)**

A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) advising on the financial performance of the Housing - Non HRA Revenue Account to the period ended 15 January 2007.

Having heard Councillor Agnew, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

HOUSING MAINTENANCE TRADING OPERATION 2006/2007 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE TO 15 JANUARY 2007 (PERIOD 9)

A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) presenting the interim cumulative financial information for the period ending 15 January 2007.

Having heard the Manager of Finance, Department of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION: WAITING LIST, VOIDS, LETS AND HOMELESS

A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) providing statistical information in relation to the waiting list for West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) houses, the reasons for termination of tenancies and the void and lets position as at 31 January 2007.

After discussion and having heard the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) and the Principal Solicitor in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) that the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) would investigate the potential for disposal of void housing at 9 Miller Road, Haldane and the waste ground at the rear of the property to a Housing Association for demolition at the expense of the Housing Association; and
- (2) that the report on the outcome of the investigation be submitted for consideration at the meeting of Council on 25 April 2007; and
- (3) to note the contents of the report.

HOUSE SALES

A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) providing information on West Dunbartonshire Council houses sold under the Right to Buy scheme between 1 April 2006 and 31 January 2007. The appendix to the report gives details of houses sold by type and by area, together with information for the financial year 2005/06 for comparison purposes

After discussion and having heard the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed :-

- (1) that the feasibility of using long-term voids for low cost ownership be investigated for managing voids and reported to a future meeting; and
- (2) to note the contents of the report.

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR SURVEY (SEPTEMBER 2006)

A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) providing details and the results of the anti social behaviour survey conducted in September 2006, and comparing the results with a similar survey carried out in September 2005.

After discussion and having heard the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) and the Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator in further explanation of the report, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR: STRATHCLYDE POLICE

A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services):-

- (a) providing details of how the funding provided to Strathclyde Police under West Dunbartonshire Council's anti social behaviour budget is being spent; and
- (b) seeking approval to continue to provide Scottish Executive funding to Strathclyde Police to support their initiatives to tackle anti social behaviour.

Following discussion and having heard the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services), the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to the use of Scottish Executive grant funding for tackling anti social behaviour to:-
 - (a) make a payment of £100,000 to Strathclyde Police to fund the deployment of officers on overtime for one year from June 2007; and
 - (b) make a payment of £33,000 to Strathclyde Police to fund a Temporary Senior Analyst post for one year from June 2007;
- (2) to instruct the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) to provide a report to a future meeting of Council on the set up of a pilot Lettings Initiative; and
- (3) to instruct the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) to consider the establishment of an Anti Social Behaviour Forum with representatives from the Community, Councillors and the Police to consult with the local community and report to future meeting of Council.

HOUSING, REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES – PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) providing information on the performance of areas within the housing service.

The report contains information on:-

- (a) Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Statutory Performance Indicators (SPIs) for the third quarter of 2006/07 and audited year-end performance figures;
- (b) the Department's programme of Best Value Reviews and quality initiatives for the Housing Service; and
- (c) progress in meeting Corporate and Service Plan actions.

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

BEST VALUE REVIEW OF TENANCY SERVICES

A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) advising of the outcome of the Best Value Review of Tenancy Services and outlining the preferred option for future service delivery.

The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the outcome of the Best Value review of Tenancy Services; and
- (2) to approve the preferred option for future service delivery detailed in Section 3 of the report in terms that the service remains in-house with improvements to be undertaken via the Service Improvement Plan.

PROPOSED T-MOBILE INSTALLATION

A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) providing an update on the outcome of a survey undertaken by the agents of T-Mobile UK Ltd, Messrs Stappard Howes, in relation to telecommunications equipment being installed on the rooftop of Mountblow House Flats.

After discussion and having heard the Head of Housing and Property Services in further explanation of the report, Councillor Agnew, seconded by Councillor Rooney, moved that the following recommendations contained within the aforementioned report be approved:-

- (1) to instruct the Acting Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services (Housing and Regeneration Services) to write formally to Messrs Stappard Howes advising that the Council does not wish to progress this matter any further; and
- (2) to note the contents of the report.

As an amendment, Councillor McLaughlin, seconded by Councillor McGregor, moved:-

That the Committee agree an additional recommendation, that is: that the Council have a blanket policy that no telecommunication masts be installed on any Council tenanted residential housing developments.

On a vote being taken, 3 Members voted for the amendment and 5 for the motion, which was accordingly declared carried.

The meeting closed at 12.55 p.m.