

HOUSING, ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

At a Special Meeting of the Housing, Environment & Economic Development Committee held in Meeting Room 2, Council Offices, Garshake Road, Dumbarton on Thursday, 26 May 2011 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillors Jim Bolla, Jim Brown, Gail Casey*, William Hendrie, David McBride, Jonathan McColl, Jim McElhill and Craig McLaughlin.

* Attended later in the meeting.

Attending: Elaine Melrose, Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development; Helen Turley, Head of Housing and Community Safety; Jackie Gallen, Policy Officer; David Allan, Estates Surveyor; Jennifer Ogilvie, Business Unit Finance Partner; Sally Michael, Principal Solicitor; and Craig Stewart, Committee Officer, Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services.

Apology: An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor Geoff Calvert.

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.

INNOVATION AND INVESTMENT FUND BID

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

During consideration of this item Councillor McColl moved suspension of Standing Orders as the decision that had been taken on stock transfer was within the last 6 months. The Legal Officer, Sally Michael, was heard in clarification of whether Standing Orders should be suspended and she confirmed that it would be advisable to check when the substantive decision was taken in order to determine the matter.

ADJOURNMENT

After hearing Councillor Hendrie, Chair, the Committee agreed to adjourn for a short period of time to enable the Legal Officer and Committee Officer to check when the decision was made in relation to stock transfer. The meeting reconvened at 2.50 p.m. with all those Members shown on the sederunt in attendance, including Councillor Casey who entered the meeting at this point.

Having heard the Legal Officer confirm that the last substantive decision in relation to partial housing stock transfer was taken on 6 October 2010 and accordingly Standing Orders was not required to be suspended in the circumstances, Councillor Hendrie, seconded by Councillor C. McLaughlin, moved:-

That the Committee agrees:-

- (1) to approve the content of the proposals to be submitted to the Scottish Government; and
- (2) to note that a further report would be submitted to the Committee to advise on the outcome of the submission and advising of any further steps to be taken.

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

This Committee welcomes the Scottish Government's support for Council housing and agrees to approve the content of the proposals to be submitted to the Scottish Government.

However, at a time when this Council intends to transfer almost half of its Council housing stock to Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), this Committee recognises that the Scottish Government could well view this bid as being perverse. This is particularly sensitive given the Executive Director's statement in Paragraph 3.1 of the report that 'Due to significant changes in investment funding and subsidy for building affordable housing, it is predicted that very few RSLs within the area will be able to build new homes.'

Therefore, in order to maximise the possibility of success with this bid and to utilise current balances within the HRA in order to match any investment forthcoming from the Scottish Government, this Committee agrees to abandon the controversial and doomed partial Stock Transfer policy and use its efforts to improve existing Council Housing stock.

This Committee notes that a further report will be submitted to Committee to advise on the outcome of the submission and advising of any further steps to be taken.

As a further amendment Councillor McColl, seconded by Councillor McElhill, moved:-

That the Committee agrees:-

- (1) to approve the content of the proposals to be submitted to the Scottish Government and reaffirm the Council's policy of partial stock transfer as agreed at the meeting of the Housing, Environment & Economic Development Committee on 6 October 2010; and
- (2) to note that a further report would be submitted to the Committee to advise on the outcome of the submission and advising of any further steps to be taken.

On a vote being taken between the first amendment (Councillor McBride) and second amendment (Councillor McColl), 5 Members voted for the second amendment and 3 for the first amendment.

On a further vote being taken between the second amendment (Councillor McColl) and the motion (Councillor Hendrie), 5 Members voted for the second amendment and 2 for the motion. Accordingly the second amendment was declared carried.

The meeting closed at 3.05 p.m.