

## SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Social Justice Committee held in the Council Chambers, Municipal Buildings, Station Road, Dumbarton on Wednesday, 13 September 2006 at 11.00 a.m.

**Present:** Councillors Denis Agnew, Gail Casey, James Flynn, Linda McColl, Marie McNair and Martin Rooney.

**Attending:** \*Bill Clark, Acting Director of Social Work Services; Margaret Caldwell, Manager of Housing Operations; James Pow, Manager of Finance, Jeff Stobo, Strategy Manager, Stephen McGonagle, Manager of Repairs and Maintenance, Department of Housing and Technical Services; Stephen West, Manager of Resources, Department of Social Work Services; Stephen McKendrick, Anti Social Behaviour Officer; Sally Michael, Principal Solicitor and Nuala Borthwick, Administrative Assistant.

\* Arrived later in the meeting.

**Also**

**Attending:** Anni Donaldson, Development Worker, West Dunbartonshire Domestic Abuse Partnership and William Pook, Finance Officer, Health Improvement and Social Justice Partnership.

**Apologies:** Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Jim Bollan, Dennis Brogan, Craig McLaughlin and Douglas McAllister.

### APPOINTMENT OF CONVENER

9962 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 14 June 2006 (Page 2505, paragraph 9291 refers), the Committee was requested to consider the appointment of Convener of the Social Justice Committee.

9963 The Principal Solicitor requested nominations for the position of Convener. On a motion by Councillor Agnew, seconded by Councillor McColl, it was agreed that Councillor McNair be appointed as Convener. Accordingly, Councillor McNair assumed the Chair.

**CONVENER'S REMARKS**

- 9964 Before commencing with the business of the meeting, Councillor McNair thanked Members for the appointment of Convener and thereafter welcomed Councillor Casey to her first meeting as a member of the Social Justice Committee.

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

- 9965 The Minutes of Meeting of the Social Justice Committee held on 14 June 2006 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

**ACCESS IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME 2005/06 AND 2006/07**

- 9966 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive outlining improvements in access to Council buildings by disabled people.
- 9967 The Committee agreed to note the information provided in the report.

**PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS – HOUSING MAINTENANCE TRADING OPERATIONS (HMTO) REPAIRS TARGETS**

- 9968 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 14 June 2006 (Page 2502, paragraph 9274 refers), a report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services providing information on the actions being taken to improve Housing Maintenance Trading Operation (HMTO) repairs targets.
- 9969 Having heard Councillor Flynn, Service Spokesperson for Housing Services, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

**PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS – RE-LET TIMES**

- 9970 With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of the Committee held on 14 June 2006 (Page 2502, paragraph 9274 refers), a report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services providing information on the actions being taken to improve re-let times for the housing stock.
- 9971 Having heard the Manager of Housing Operations in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the report and the actions being taken to improve re-let times for housing stock.

**PERFORMANCE OF THE HOUSING MAINTENANCE TRADING  
OPERATION DURING 2005/2006**

- 9972 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services updating the Committee on the performance of the Housing Maintenance Trading Operation against desired outcomes and objectives for 2005/2006 as detailed within the Housing Maintenance Business Plan for the years 2004-2007.
- 9973 The Committee agreed to note the progress made by the Housing Maintenance Trading Operation in meeting the key business objectives as detailed within the Housing Maintenance Business Plan for 2004-2007.

**HOUSING MAINTENANCE TRADING OPERATION 2006/2007 –  
FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE TO 15 JULY 2006 (PERIOD 3)**

- 9974 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services presenting the interim cumulative financial information for the period ending 15 July 2006.
- 9975 Having heard the Manager of Finance in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

**HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2006/2007 – BUDGETARY CONTROL  
STATEMENT TO 15 JULY 2006 (PERIOD 3)**

- 9976 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services providing an update on the financial performance of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to the period ended 15 July 2006.
- 9977 Having heard Councillor Flynn, Service Spokesperson for Housing Services and the Manager of Finance, it was agreed:-
- (a) that the Manager of Finance would investigate the requirement for housing financial reports to be reported to both Council and the Social Justice Committee; and
  - (b) otherwise to note the contents of the report.

**HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2006/2007 – BUDGETARY CONTROL  
REPORT TO 15 JULY 2006 (PERIOD 3)**

- 9978 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services advising on the progress of the HRA Capital Programme 2006/2007.
- 9979 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

**HOUSING – NON HRA REVENUE ACCOUNT  
– BUDGETARY CONTROL STATEMENT 2006/2007  
TO 15 JULY 2006 (PERIOD 3)**

- 9980 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services advising the Committee on the financial performance of the Housing – Non HRA Revenue Account to the period ended 15 July 2006.
- 9981 It was noted that budgetary control statements for the Housing – Non HRA Revenue Account were also presented to the full Council to allow the Council to monitor performance.
- 9982 Having heard the Manager of Housing Operations, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

**BENEFIT INVESTIGATION TEAM FRAUD RESULTS 2005/2006  
AND ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN 2006/2007**

- 9983 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services advising on the performance of the benefit investigation team during 2005/2006 and seeking approval for the team's Business Plan for 2006/2007.
- 9984 Having heard the Manager of Housing Operations in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to note the Benefit Investigation Team Fraud Results Report 2005/2006; and
  - (2) to approve the Benefit Investigation Team Business Plan for 2006/2007.

**PRESSURED AREA STATUS:  
RESTRICTING THE SALE OF COUNCIL HOUSES**

- 9985 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services advising of legislative and associated issues relating to placing restrictions on the sale of Council houses to sitting tenants.
- 9986 The Committee agreed:-
- (1) to note the contents of the report; and
  - (2) to review the Council's options at a future date.

### **RENT ARREARS**

- 9987 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services updating the Committee on the arrears position for the financial year 2005/2006.
- 9988 Having heard the Manager of Housing Operations in answer to Members' questions and following discussion, the Committee agreed to note the progress made in the rent arrears performance.

### **STATISTICAL INFORMATION: WAITING LIST, VOIDS, LETS AND HOMELESS**

- 9989 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental 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 30 June 2006.
- 9990 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

### **HOUSE SALES**

- 9991 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services providing information on West Dunbartonshire Council houses sold under the Right to Buy scheme between 1 April 2006 and 30 June 2006. The appendices to the report provided details of houses sold by type and by area, together with information for the financial year 2004/2005 for comparison purposes.
- 9992 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

### **ESTATE AUDITS**

- 9993 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services advising on the introduction of a system of estate audits for the management of the Council's estates.
- 9994 Having heard the Manager of Housing Operations in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to note the introduction of estate audits as a pro-active approach to estate management;
  - (2) to consultation being undertaken as outlined in 3.4 to the Director's report;

- (3) that Estate Officers be instructed to consult with the Elected Member and Community Council for the area where trees, shrubs and hedging are considered for removal; and
- (4) that the Manager of Housing Operations and staff involved in Estates Management be commended for their work in introducing the system of estate audits for the management of the Council's estates.

#### **DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS AND APPEALS**

9995 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services providing information on housing and council tax benefit performance for discretionary housing payments and appeals to the Appeals Tribunal for the financial year 2005/2006.

9996 Having heard Councillor Flynn, Service Spokesperson for Housing Services, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

#### **HOUSING AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT FRAUD STRATEGY**

9997 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services seeking approval for the revised Housing and Council Tax Benefit Fraud Strategy for West Dunbartonshire Council.

9998 The Committee agreed to approve the Housing and Council Tax Benefit Fraud Strategy by West Dunbartonshire Council.

#### **HOUSING, REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES – PERFORMANCE REPORT**

9999 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services providing information on the performance of areas within the housing service. The report contains information on:-

- (1) Statutory Performance Indicators for the first quarter of 2006/07 and unaudited year end performance figures which were not available for the previous report in June 2006 (Appendix 1 to the Director's report); and
- (2) the Department's programme of Best Value Reviews for the housing service (Appendix 2 to the report).

10000 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

## **REVIEW OF ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR SERVICES**

- 10001 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services providing details of the existing out of hours anti social behaviour services and outline proposals to integrate sections and improve service delivery.
- 10002 Having heard the Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator in further explanation of the report and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to approve the re-structure proposals for the anti-social behaviour services as detailed in Section 3 of the Director's report;
  - (2) to further discussions being undertaken with the trades unions to implement the re-structure; and
  - (3) to commend the Convener of Housing Services and all staff involved for their hard work in producing the proposals to integrate sections and improve service delivery.

## **SUPPORTING PEOPLE FUNDED SERVICES: UNMET NEED**

- 10003 A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services providing an update on levels of unmet need for services funded through the Supporting People Grant.
- 10004 Having heard Councillor Rooney, Convener of Social Work Services, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

## **REPORT ON STATUTORY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2005/06 AND QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT – APRIL TO JUNE 2006 – COMMUNITY CARE SERVICES**

- 10005 A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services providing a progress report on Social Work Performance for the Period 1 April 2006 to 30 June 2006.
- 10006 In line with Scottish Executive Best Value Guidance and Audit Scotland recommendations, the report presents information for elected members and Stakeholders as part of wider Public Performance Reporting.
- 10007 The Committee agreed to note the contents of the report.

**PROPOSED MEMBERSHIP OF WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL AS  
A PARTNER IN THE JOINT EQUIPMENT STORE OPERATED BY  
GREATER GLASGOW INDEPENDENT LIVING EQUIPMENT SERVICES  
(GGILES)**

- 10008 A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services providing information on the current status of proposed membership of West Dunbartonshire Council as one of the Partners in the Joint Equipment Store operated by Greater Glasgow Independent Living Equipment Services (GGILES).
- 10009 Having heard Councillor Rooney, Convener of Social Work Services and the Acting Director of Social Work Services in further explanation of the report, the Committee agreed:-
- (1) to approve the application by West Dunbartonshire Council to become one of the partners within the Greater Glasgow Independent Living Equipment Service with effect from 1 April 2007;
  - (2) to instruct the Acting Director of Social Work Services to undertake negotiations over the appropriate transfer of staff to the new service;
  - (3) that the report be referred to the Health Improvement and Social Justice Partnership for consideration by the Partnership; and
  - (4) that future progress reports be made through the Health Improvement and Social Justice Partnership.

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE DOMESTIC ABUSE PARTNERSHIP**

- 10010 A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services:-
- (a) presenting the End of Project Report of the West Dunbartonshire Domestic Abuse Partnership under the Scottish Executive Domestic Abuse Development Fund;
  - (b) providing an update on some of the achievements of the Partnership during the period 2004/2006; and
  - (c) presenting the Draft Action Plan 2006/2008 for the first phase of the project under the new Scottish Executive funding stream to address the broader agenda of Violence Against Women.
- 10011 The Convener, Councillor McNair, introduced Ms Anni Donaldson, Development Worker, West Dunbartonshire Domestic Abuse Partnership to the Committee. Thereafter, Ms Donaldson provided an overview of the work being done by the Partnership on the broader agenda of domestic abuse against women and children.

10012 After hearing Ms Donaldson and following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to continue to support the work of WDDAP in line with the development of its Action Plan for 2006 to 2008;
- (2) to the need to maintain the issues of tackling domestic abuse and violence against women as Council priorities;
- (3) to request regular progress reports on the work of the Partnership; and
- (4) to commend the work and investment of the Council and WDDAP in tackling domestic abuse in West Dunbartonshire.

**SOCIAL WORK BUDGETARY POSITION 2006/07  
AS AT PERIOD 4 TO 15 AUGUST 2006**

10013 A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services advising of the performance of the Social Work budget for the period to 15 August 2006.

10014 The Committee agreed to note the content of the report.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

10015 Having heard Councillor Flynn, the Committee noted that he intended to raise the issue of Officers leaving the meeting without the permission of the Convener with the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services.

The meeting closed at 12.05 p.m.