

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Social Justice Committee held in the Council Chambers, Clydebank Town Hall, Dumbarton Road, Clydebank on Wednesday, 8 February 2006 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillors Denis Agnew, Dennis Brogan, James Flynn, Linda McColl, Marie McNair, Martin Rooney and Andy White*.

*Arrived later in the meeting.

Attending: David McMillan, Director of Housing and Technical Services; Bill Clark, Acting Director of Social Work Services; John McKerracher, Head of Technical Services; Margaret Caldwell, Manager of Housing Operations; Valerie Smith, Section Head (Strategy); James Pow, Manager of Finance, Department of Housing and Technical Services; Stephen West, Manager of Resources, Department of Social Work Services; Moira Swanson, Research and Information Manager; Miriam McKenna, Policy and Development Officer and Nuala Borthwick, Administrative Assistant.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors Jim Bollan and Douglas McAllister.

Councillor Denis Agnew in the Chair

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

8073 The Minutes of Meeting of the Social Justice Committee held on 14 December 2005 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

REVIEWED RACE EQUALITY SCHEME AND PROGRESS REPORT 2004 – 2005

8074 A report was submitted by the Chief Executive seeking approval of the reviewed and updated Race Equality Action Plan and Progress Report on the Race Equality Action Plan 2004-2005.

8075 Having heard Councillor McNair, Service Spokesperson for Equal Opportunities, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the revised Race Equality Scheme and its adoption as policy across the Council; and
- (2) to note the Race Equality Scheme Progress Report 2004 – 2005.

PERFORMANCE REPORT

8076 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services providing information on the Statutory Performance Indicators for the Department of Housing and Technical Services and the Department's programme of Best Value Reviews.

8077 **After discussion and having heard the Director of Housing and Technical Services and the Manager of Housing Operations in explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-**

- (1) that details would be provided to Councillor Brogan direct; and**
- (2) to note the contents of the report.**

Note: Councillor White entered the meeting during consideration of the above item.

RENT ARREARS

8078 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services providing an update on the current tenant rent arrears position at the beginning of January 2006.

8079 Having heard the Manager of Housing Operations in further explanation the Committee agreed to note the progress made in rent arrears performance.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL – PETS POLICY

8080 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services seeking approval for the introduction of the Pets Policy in respect of houses owned and managed by West Dunbartonshire Council following tenant consultation.

8081 Having heard the Manager of Housing Operations in elaboration and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the results of the Pets Policy consultation exercise;

- (2) that the Pets Policy remain unchanged following the consultation exercise; and
- (3) that a copy of the Pets Policy and a covering letter be issued to all residents of multi-storey flats.

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS

- 8082 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services providing information on the actions being taken to improve the performance in Housing Benefit Recoverable Overpayments, Void Management, Rent Arrears and Homelessness.
- 8083 Having heard the Head of Technical Services and the Manager of Housing Operations in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the report and the actions being taken to improve performance in all areas.

GYPSY/TRAVELLERS SITE, DENNYSTOUN FORGE, DUMBARTON

- 8084 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services:-
- (a) advising of the formal offer of grant assistance received from the Scottish Executive to upgrade the facilities on the Gypsy/Travellers Site at Dennyistoun Forge, Dumbarton; and
 - (b) requesting a contribution from the Council to meet the total cost of the proposed work.
- 8085 The Committee agreed:-
- (1) to note the offer of grant assistance being made by the Scottish Executive and to approve the Council's contribution of £11,970 from the Homeless Persons budget 2006/2007 towards the cost of the proposed work; and
 - (2) to instruct the Director of Housing and Technical Services to liaise with the Council's grant officer to accept the award.

FOLLOW UP REVIEW OF HOUSING RENT SYSTEM

- 8086 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services advising of progress made in addressing the issues raised by Audit Scotland in their audit of the Housing Rents System.

8087 The Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress made to date; and
- (2) that the item remain on the agenda of the Committee until the one remaining outstanding issue has been resolved.

**HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY, HOUSING REFERENCE POLICY
AND SHELTERED HOUSING POLICY FOR
WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

8088 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services seeking approval for policies on Housing Allocation, Housing References and Sheltered Housing for West Dunbartonshire Council.

8089 Having heard Councillor Flynn, Service Spokesperson for Housing and following discussion, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the Housing Allocation Policy for West Dunbartonshire Council;
- (2) to approve the Housing Reference Policy for West Dunbartonshire Council;
- (3) to approve the Sheltered Housing Policy for West Dunbartonshire Council; and
- (4) to set up a Member/Officer Working Group to scrutinise the Housing Allocation Policy.

GAS FIRE UPGRADES

8090 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services seeking approval of a recommendation relating to the treatment of existing gas fires in houses where new or replacement central heating systems are being installed.

8091 Having heard the Manager of Technical Services in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to approve the proposed advice to tenants regarding gas fire installations as contained in paragraph 3.3 of the report.

**HOUSING MAINTENANCE TRADING OPERATION 2005/2006 –
FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE TO 15 JANUARY 2006 (PERIOD 9)**

- 8092 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services presenting interim cumulative financial information for the period ending 15 January 2006 (Period 9).
- 8093 Having heard the Manager of Finance in elaboration the Committee agreed to note the content of the report.
- 8094 Councillor Brogan, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Housing staff for their hard work in improving the Financial Performance of the Housing Maintenance Trading Operation.

**HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2005/2006 – BUDGETARY CONTROL
STATEMENT TO 15 JANUARY 2006 (PERIOD 9)**

- 8095 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services advising of the progress of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to the period ended 15 January 2006.
- 8096 Having heard the Manager of Finance in further explanation the Committee agreed to note the report.

**HOUSING – NON HRA REVENUE ACCOUNT 2005/2006 – BUDGETARY
CONTROL STATEMENT TO 15 JANUARY 2006 (PERIOD 9)**

- 8097 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services advising on the financial performance of the Housing – Non HRA Revenue Account for the period ended 15 January 2006.
- 8098 Having heard the Manager of Finance in elaboration the Committee agreed to note the report.

**HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2005/2006 – BUDGETARY CONTROL
REPORT TO 15 JANUARY 2006**

- 8099 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services advising on the progress of the HRA Capital Programme 2005/2006.
- 8100 The Committee agreed to note the content of the report.

STATISTICAL INFORMATION: WAITING LIST, VOIDS, LETS AND HOMELESS

- 8101 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services providing statistical information in relation to the waiting list for West Dunbartonshire Council houses, the reasons for termination of tenancies and the void and lets position as at 31 December 2005.
- 8102 Having heard Councillor Flynn, Service Spokesperson for Housing in further explanation, the Committee agreed to note the content of the report.

HOUSE SALES

- 8103 A report was submitted by the Director of Housing and Technical Services providing information on West Dunbartonshire Council houses sold under the Right to Buy scheme between 1 April and 31 December 2005.
- 8104 Having heard the Manager of Finance in further explanation the Committee agreed to note the content of the report.

SOCIAL WORK SERVICES – QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

- 8105 A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services providing information on the performance of the Department of Social Work across all Community Care Services.
- 8106 Having heard Councillor Rooney, Service Spokesperson for Social Work, the Committee agreed to note the report.

SOCIAL WORK BUDGETARY POSITION 2005/2006 AS AT PERIOD 9 TO 15 JANUARY 2006

- 8107 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 January 2006.
- 8108 Having heard Councillor Rooney, Service Spokesperson for Social Work, the Committee agreed to note the report.

CONSULTATION POLICY GUIDANCE

- 8109 A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services providing information on the Departmental Consultation Policy Guidance and the department's current plan of consultation activity to 31 March 2008.

- 8110 Having heard the Acting Director of Social Work Services in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed to note the content of the report.

CARE COMMISSION INSPECTION REPORTS

- 8111 A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services summarising three inspection reports received from the Care Commission on day care services for older people and adults with a learning disability managed by West Dunbartonshire Council for the period between September 2005 and December 2005.
- 8112 Having heard Councillor Rooney, Service Spokesperson for Social Work in elaboration of the report, the Committee agreed to note the content of the report.

SOCIAL WORK GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

- 8113 A report was submitted by the Acting Director of Social Work Services advising of grant applications received by Social Work Services from voluntary organisations seeking funding and making recommendations on the level of funding to be provided.
- 8114 The Committee agreed:-
- (1) to approve the recommendations in relation to the various applications detailed in the Appendix to the report, a copy of which is appended hereto;
 - (2) to note the likely year-end position on the grants budget; and
 - (3) to approve delegation of authority to determine grant applications received in the period until 31 March 2006 in such way as is specified in terms of paragraph 3.6 of the report.

The meeting closed at 10.40 a.m.