

HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee held by video conference on Wednesday, 1 September 2021 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Provost William Hendrie, Councillors Gail Casey, Karen Conaghan, Ian Dickson, Diane Docherty, David McBride, Jonathan McColl, Iain McLaren, John Mooney and Sally Page.

Attending: Peter Barry, Chief Officer – Housing and Employability; Angela Wilson, Chief Officer – Supply, Distribution and Property; John Kerr, Housing Development and Homelessness Manager; Nicola Pettigrew, Housing Operations Manager; Martin Feeney, Building Services Manager; Alan Young, Housing Asset and Investment Manager; Janice Rainey, Finance Business Partner; Michelle Lynn, Asset Co-ordinator; Sally Michael, Principal Solicitor; Ashley MacIntyre and Lynn Straker, Committee Officers.

Also Attending: Superintendent Douglas Wilson and Chief Constable Coleen Wylie, Police Scotland and Group Commander Gregg McKearney, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor John Millar.

Councillor Diane Docherty in the Chair

STATEMENT BY CHAIR – AUDIO STREAMING

Councillor Docherty, Chair, welcomed everyone to the September meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee which was being held remotely, in terms of Section 43 of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

Accordingly, the Chair advised that a process/procedure had been developed for the meeting (a copy of which had previously been circulated to Members). Thereafter, the Committee agreed to note the procedure in place for the conduct of the meeting and the meeting then continued by video conferencing.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was noted that there were no declarations of interest in any item of business on the agenda.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee held on 5 May 2021 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

As requested in the previous meeting, a letter was sent to Shona Robinson, MSP, regarding Silverton Defective Properties. It was noted that Chief Officer, Housing and Employability would circulate a copy of the letter sent to Members after the meeting.

OPEN FORUM

The Committee noted that no open forum questions had been submitted by members of the public.

MORE HOMES WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE – WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLY DELIVERY PROGRAMME

A report was submitted by Chief Officer, Housing and Employability providing an update on progress with West Dunbartonshire's More Homes Programme which oversees the strategic delivery of the Council's new homes programme.

After discussion and having heard the Housing Development and Homelessness Manager in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the content of the report and the progress made to date in the delivery of the Council's More Homes West Dunbartonshire approach including the practical completion and handover of the full projects at Creveul Court, Aitkenbar and Haldane this year;
- (2) to note the success of the Council's Creveul Court development being shortlisted for the Scottish Home Awards in the Affordable Housing Development of the Year (social rent) category and also the Homes for Scotland Small Development of the Year category;
- (3) to approve the delivery of a procurement strategy to appoint a main contractor to deliver the proposed Pappert 25 new home development on the completion of the ongoing feasibility works;
- (4) to note the proposed new benchmark assumption rates outlined in paragraph 6.3 of this report and the Scottish Government's ongoing commitment to

maintain a differential between Council and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) for the delivery of new housing; and

- (5) to note the current volatility in the construction marketplace because of a range of issues and the potential impacts that could have on the council house delivery programme and request that the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability provides ongoing updates to the Committee on this matter as part of this regular update report to Committee.
- (6) to note that officers will provide information to Councillor Docherty for inclusion in the letter to Cabinet Secretary. The information will be used to quantify how many additional houses could be built over the time period to ensure an evidence based approach.

SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER/ REGULATION OF SOCIAL HOUSING IN SCOTLAND ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT

A report was submitted by Chief Officer, Housing and Employability providing West Dunbartonshire Council's annual progress report on meeting the requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

After discussion and having heard the Housing Development and Homelessness Manager in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of this report recognising the impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on 2020/21 performance (outlined at paragraph 4.5 of the report) and the key areas of focus for the Housing Improvement Board during 2021/22 (outlined at paragraph 4.17 of the report); and
- (2) to agree that a further progress report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter be submitted to the November 2021 meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee. This report will include detailed benchmarking performance information against all local authorities in Scotland highlighting the impacts of the pandemic on housing and homelessness services across Scotland.

"HOME AT THE HEART 2019-24" WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE'S RAPID RE- HOUSING TRANSITION PLAN UPDATE AND NEW APPROACHES TO HOMELESSNESS PROGRESS REPORT

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability providing an update on "Home at the Heart" our Rapid Re-housing Transition Plan (RRTP) for the period 2019-24 and new approaches to homelessness.

After discussion and having heard the Housing Development and Homelessness Manager in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the progress made in the first two years of “Home at the Heart”, which has informed an update report submitted to the Scottish Government at the end of June 2021 and attached as Appendix 2;
- (2) to approve that our Year 2 pandemic related underspend outlined at 4.13 is used to meet the objectives of the West Dunbartonshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, together with the Year 3 funding allocated by the Scottish Government, previously approved by the Housing and Communities Committee in February 2021;
- (3) to approve our updated Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan attached as Appendix 1 and note the main objectives for Year 3;
- (4) to note the uncertainty around future funding and specifically the risk to our Housing First approach; and
- (5) to note that an annual update and progress report will be provided to a future Housing and Communities Committee in May 2022.

NO HOME FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE: WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS SERVICES DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability seeking approval for “No Home for Domestic Abuse, West Dunbartonshire Council’s Housing and Homelessness Services Domestic Abuse Policy”.

After discussion and having heard the Housing Development and Homelessness Manager in further explanation and in answer to Members’ questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the updated “No Home for Domestic Abuse, West Dunbartonshire Council’s Housing and Homelessness Services Domestic Abuse Policy”, attached as Appendix 1; and
- (2) to request that Chief Officer, Housing and Employability ensures the effective implementation of the updated policy.

SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON A REVIEW OF THE SCOTTISH SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability providing an overview of West Dunbartonshire Council’s response to the Scottish Government’s consultation on a review of the Scottish Social Housing Charter and seeking approval to submit this response as part of the consultation process.

After discussion and having heard the Housing Development and Homelessness Manager in further explanation and in answer to Members’ questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve West Dunbartonshire Council's draft submission to the Scottish Government's consultation attached as Appendix 1;
- (2) to note that if approved, our consultation response will be submitted to the Scottish Government by the 9 September 2021 closing date; and
- (3) to note that following the consultation, the Scottish Government will develop an updated Scottish Social Housing Charter and ask the Scottish Parliament to consider the changes and approve a revised Charter from 1st April 2022.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 31 JULY 2021 (PERIOD 4)

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability providing an update on the financial performance to 31 July 2021 (Period 4) of the HRA revenue and capital budgets for 2021/22.

After discussion and having heard the Finance Business Partner in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the revenue analysis shows a projected annual favourable variance of £0.002m; and
- (2) to note the net projected annual position in relation to the capital plan is highlighting an in-year variance of £1.499m which is made up of slippage of £1.799m (3.72%) and overspend of £0.300m (0.62%) as detailed in appendix 4.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2021/22 AS AT PERIOD 4 (31 JULY 2021)

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer, Housing and Employability providing an update on the financial performance to 31 July 2021 (Period 4) of those services under the auspices of the Housing and Communities Committee.

After discussion and having heard the Business Unit Finance Partner in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of this report which shows the revenue budget forecast to underspend against budget by £0.039m (1.1%) at the year-end;
- (2) to note the net projected annual position in relation to relevant capital projects which is showing no projected variance; and
- (3) to note the progress on efficiencies incorporated into budgets for 2021/22.

VARIATION IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

Having heard the Chair, Councillor Docherty, the Committee agreed to vary the order of business as hereinafter minuted.

SCRUTINY REPORTS

(B) FIRE AND RESCUE SCRUTINY QUARTER 1 REPORT

A report was submitted by Group Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service providing appropriate performance data measured against priorities in the West Dunbartonshire Local Fire and Rescue Plan.

After discussion and having heard Group Commander McKearney, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, the Committee agreed to note the contents of the attached Scottish Fire and Rescue Service West Dunbartonshire Council Year to Date Report.

(A) POLICE SCRUTINY REPORT

A report was submitted by the Chief Constable, Police Scotland providing members with an update.

After discussion and having heard from Superintendent Wilson, Police Scotland, the Committee agreed to note the update given on progress against the Local Police Plan.

The meeting closed at 11:27 a.m.