

HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee held by video conference on Wednesday, 2 February 2022 at 2.02 p.m.

Present: Councillors Gail Casey, Karen Conaghan, Ian Dickson, Diane Docherty, Jim Finn, David McBride, Jonathan McColl, Iain McLaren, John Millar, 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; Michelle Lynn, Assets Co-ordinator; Sally Michael, Principal Solicitor; and Gabriella Gonda, Committee Officer.

Also attending: Chief Inspector Coleen Wylie and Chief Superintendent Lynn Ratcliff, Police Scotland; and Area Commander Joe McKay, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Apology: An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Provost William Hendrie.

Councillor Diane Docherty in the Chair

STATEMENT BY CHAIR – AUDIO STREAMING

Councillor Docherty, Chair, advised that the meeting was being audio streamed and broadcast live to the internet and would be available for playback.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

RECORDING OF VOTES

The Committee agreed that all votes taken during the meeting would be done by roll call vote to ensure an accurate record.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee held on 3 November 2021 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

OPEN FORUM

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

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

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

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability and 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, St Andrews, Haldane and Dumbarton Harbour within 2021; and
- (2) to note that a refreshed More Home West Dunbartonshire delivery programme would be submitted to the next meeting of the Housing and Communities Committee.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY REVIEW

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability seeking approval for changes to the Housing Allocations Policy resulting from a full review of the policy that was carried out during 2021 and which was the subject of a formal consultation which ended in autumn 2021.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the proposed changes to the West Dunbartonshire Council Housing Allocation Policy and updated policy attached as Appendix 1 to the report with the exception of para 4.17 to the report; and
- (2) that the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability would ensure the effective implementation of the updated Housing Allocation Policy including an appropriate communications plan.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2022-2027 – MORE HOMES BETTER HOMES WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability presenting and seeking final approval of the Council's new Local Housing Strategy (LHS) for the five year period 2022 to 2027.

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

- (1) to approve the final West Dunbartonshire Local Housing Strategy 2022-2027 as appended to the report;
- (2) to note the establishment of the Local Housing Strategy Delivery Board which would oversee the implementation of the Local Housing Strategy; and
- (3) to note that an Annual update report would be presented to the Housing and Communities Committee in May of each year.

“HOME AT THE HEART 2019-24” WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE’S RAPID REHOUSING TRANSITION PLAN UPDATE AND NEW APPROACHES TO HOMELESSNESS PROGRESS REPORT

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability:-

- (a) providing an update in terms of the progress and challenges in delivering Year 3 of “Home at the Heart”, our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP), and outlining the key findings from the review of our residential supported accommodation; and
- (b) providing an update regarding the Scottish Government funding and our local response to the recommendations made by the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG).

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

- (1) to note the progress and challenges in delivering Year 3 of our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan;
- (2) to note the key findings from the review of residential supported accommodation highlighted within paragraphs 4.17 to 4.22 of the report;
- (3) to note that Scottish Government funding of £238k had been awarded for 2022/23 for the specific delivery of the West Dunbartonshire Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan;

- (4) to approve that the Council's housing allocation letting target for homeless households be amended to 69% for 2022/23 as set out in paragraphs 4.20 and 4.21 of the report and to note that the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability would keep this target under close review based on current modelling projections;
- (5) to note the continued uncertainty around future funding and specifically the risk to our Housing First approach; and
- (6) to note that a full annual update and progress report would be provided to the Housing and Communities Committee in autumn 2022, including a fully updated Year 4 plan based on the identified 2022/23 funding.

EMPLOYABILITY SERVICE PROVISION

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability providing an update on the progress for the delivery of employability programmes and support that is set within the context of 'No One Left Behind', a new approach to employability services that requires partner input to services.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to approve the proposed approach for West Dunbartonshire to establish an Employability Grant Programme delivered through the West Dunbartonshire Local Employability Partnership as the primary model for commissioning employability services from external service providers in 2021-24; and
- (2) to note that regular progress would be reported through the Community Planning Partnership Delivery Improvement Group.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT TO 31 DECEMBER 2021 (PERIOD 9)

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer, Resources providing an update on the financial performance to 31 December 2021 (Period 9) of the HRA revenue and capital budgets for 2021/22.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability in further explanation and in answer to Members' questions, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the revenue analysis showed a projected annual favourable variance of £0.008m; and
- (2) to note the net projected annual position in relation to the capital plan was highlighting an in-year variance of £10.812m which was made up of slippage of £11.076m (22.92%) and overspend of £0.264m (0.55%) as detailed in Appendix 4 to the report.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2021/22 AS AT PERIOD 9 (31 DECEMBER 2021)

A report was submitted by the Chief Officer – Resources providing an update on the financial performance to 31 December 2021 (Period 9) of those services under the auspices of the Housing and Communities Committee.

After discussion and having heard the Chief Officer – Housing and Employability in further explanation, the Committee agreed:-

- (1) to note the contents of the report which showed the revenue budget forecast to overspend against budget by £0.676m (20.0%) at the year-end, of which £0.539m was COVID-19 related;
- (2) to note the net projected annual position in relation to relevant capital projects which showed no projected variance; and
- (3) to note the progress on efficiencies incorporated into budgets for 2021/22.

SCRUTINY REPORTS

(A) POLICE SCRUTINY REPORT

A report was submitted by the Divisional Commander, Police Scotland providing members with an update on progress against the Local Police Plan.

After discussion and having heard Chief Superintendent Ratcliff, Police Scotland, the Committee agreed to note the update provided.

(B) FIRE AND RESCUE SCRUTINY QUARTER 3 REPORT

A report was submitted by the Local Senior Officer, 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 Area Commander McKay, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, the Committee agreed to note the content of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service West Dunbartonshire Council Year to Date Report.

The meeting closed at 4.15 p.m.