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THE FIFE COUNCIL - COMMUNITY AND HOUSING SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE – REMOTE MEETING

18th March, 2021

10.00 a.m. – 11.50 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Judy Hamilton (Convener), Lesley Backhouse, John Beare, Ken Caldwell, Alistair Cameron, Neil Crooks, Linda Erskine, Fiona Grant, Helen Law, Donald Lothian, Alice McGarry, Graham Ritchie, David J Ross and Darren Watt.

ATTENDING: Michael Enston, Executive Director – Communities; Paul Vaughan, Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods, Sharon Douglas, Community Investment Team Manager, Communities and Neighbourhoods; Mark Mccall, Service Manager (Safer Communities), Paul Short, Service Manager - Housing, Health and Social Care and Older Persons and Gavin Smith, Service Manager – Housing Access and Homelessness, Housing Services; Sheila Noble, Co-ordinator (Fife Violence Against Women Partnership), Children and Families and Criminal Justice Services and Wendy MacGregor, Committee Officer, Legal and Democratic Services.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Heather Bett, Clinical Services Manager, NHS Fife and Bill Campbell, Fife Federation of Tenants and Residents Association.

URGENT ITEM - CHANGE OF MEMBERSHIP

Prior to the start of the business of the Sub-Committee, the Convener advised that there had been a change to the membership of the Sub-Committee - Councillor John Beare had replaced Councillor Kate Stewart.

On behalf of the Sub-Committee, the Convener welcomed Councillor John Beare to the meeting and thanked Councillor Kate Stewart for her contribution during her time as a member on this Sub-Committee.

205. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Lesley Backhouse, John Beare, Judy Hamilton, Donald Lothian, David J Ross and Darren Watt declared an interest in Para. 207 – ‘Support for Voluntary Organisations’ - as they were appointed as representatives of Fife Council to the following organisations-

- Councillor Backhouse – member of Toll Centre, Burntisland and Greener Kirkcaldy;
- Councillor Beare –Markinch Town Hall Management Committee and Milton of Balgonie Hall Management Committee;
- Councillor Hamilton - Fife Society for the Blind (now known as Seescape), Hayfield Community Centre, YMCA, Kirkcaldy, Linktown Action Centre, Linton Lane Centre, Raeburn Community Centre and Greener Kirkcaldy;
- Councillor/

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- Councillor Lothian - Auchtermuchty Community Centre Management Committee, Ladybank Youth Club Management Committee and Luthrie Village Hall Management Committee;
- Councillor Ross - Dunfermline and West Fife Sports Council; and
- Councillor Watt - Dunfermline and West Fife Sports Council.

Councillor Judy Hamilton also declared an interest in Para. 208 – ‘Fife Violence Against Women Partnership’ - as she was a representative of Fife Council on the Fife Violence Against Women Partnership.

206. MINUTE

The Sub-Committee considered the minute of the meeting of the Community and Housing Services Sub-Committee of 21st January, 2021.

Decision

The Sub-Committee agreed to approve the minute.

207. SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

The Sub-Committee considered a joint report by the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods and the Head of Housing, presenting recommendations for the level of support to voluntary organisations within Communities Directorate for the period 2021-2024.

Decision

The Sub-Committee approved the level of funding to voluntary organisations as detailed in Appendices 1-3 of the report.

Councillor Fiona Grant left the meeting during consideration of the above item.

208. FIFE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The Sub-Committee considered a joint report by the Interim Senior Manager (Children Services, Sexual Health BBV and Rheumatology) and the Chair of Fife Violence Against Women Partnership, updating members on the progress of the Fife Violence Against Women Partnership (FVAWP). FVAWP was responsible for the local delivery of ‘*Equally Safe - Scotland’s Strategy for Preventing and Eradicating Violence Against Women and Girls*’. The FVAWP annual report 2019-20 directly linked to the national priorities and detailed local partnership activity across a wide range of statutory and third sectors demonstrating how partners worked together.

The report highlighted the impact of Covid-19 on those with lived experience of gender-based violence. Covid-19 restrictions had significantly impacted on women and children living with domestic abuse and other forms of violence against women, creating an environment whereby risks were heightened. Risks associated with controlling, coercive and abusive behaviour had increased in lockdown both in terms of opportunity to abuse and access to support.

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'Coronavirus Supplementary Violence Against Women Guidance for Local Authorities and Partners (September 2020)' was published to support local areas to redress the increased risks, including revision to the FVAWP action plan.

Decision

The Sub-Committee:

- (1) acknowledged the importance and value of the work undertaken by the Fife Violence Against Women Partnership (FVAWP);
- (2) agreed to support the continued efforts of Fife Violence Against Women Partnership in response to Covid-19 and the revised Action plan to 2022; and
- (3) agreed that consideration should be given to whether changes in Legislation would allow Fife Council to impose a limit on the number of licensed premises in Fife, providing services such as lap dancing, stripping etc.

Councillor Fiona Grant re-joined the meeting during consideration of the above item.

209. HOUSING TRANSFER POLICY - REVIEW OF THE TRANSFER INCENTIVE SCHEME

The Sub-Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing, outlining the proposed changes to the Transfer Incentive Scheme (TIS) in support of the Housing Access Recovery Plan's approach to adopt a Transfer Led approach to Housing Allocations.

The TIS was originally introduced in 2007/08 to incentivise moves for households under-occupying tenancies, help tenants with particular needs to access the most suitable forms of housing, increase opportunities for all housing applicants and make best use of stock. Following a review of the scheme, it was proposed that measures were introduced which would enhance tenant mobility and options to progress the approach.

Decision

The Sub-Committee:-

- (1) noted the outcome of the Officers' review outlined in the report;
- (2) noted that the Head of Housing, in consultation with the Sub-Committee Convener, would take action in 2020/21 to enhance the budget for the TIS to support the Housing Access Recovery Plan and that the revised budget would continue to be available in 2021/22;
- (3) agreed that, following final consultation with the Fife Tenants' Forum, the revised TIS would be implemented by April 2021; and
- (4)/

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- (4) agreed that Housing Services and Communications actively promoted the TIS to ensure tenants under occupying larger council homes would be aware of the scheme and assistance from Fife Council Housing Service would be provided to offer a broader range of housing options and incentives to downsize.

210. RAPID REHOUSING TRANSFORMATION PLAN (2019-24) PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR CONTRIBUTION TO TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

The Sub-Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing providing members with the background and overview of a new model of service provision to enhance the contribution of the private sector to the prevention and response to homelessness. The report was part of a follow up to the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) Update considered by the Sub-Committee in November 2020, which sought approval to commission a small scale private rented sector resource to support the operation and delivery of temporary accommodation to enable the Council to meet statutory homelessness duties.

Decision

The Sub-Committee:-

- (1) agreed the proposal to commission and develop a revised model of private rented sector leasing to support the Council in meeting its statutory duties towards homeless households;
- (2) noted that the proposal would be fully governed through a procured approach with all relevant measures taken to promote high standards and accountability; and
- (3) agreed that a further report would be submitted to a future Sub-Committee meeting to seek agreement on further proposals to enhance the private rented sector contribution to the prevention and resolution of homelessness within the context of Fife's RRTP.

211. HOUSING SERVICES LOCK UP PROGRAMME - PROGRESS REPORT

The Sub-Committee considered a report by the Head of Housing updating members on progress of the programme to improve the lock up service offered to tenants and to modernise the lock up estate.

Decision

The Sub-Committee:-

- (1) noted the progress made against the improvement actions and the focus on demolitions;
- (2) approved the continued approach to demolitions and refurbishments as outlined in the report;
- (3) agreed the revised timetable and approach to area plans; and
- (4)/

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- (4) agreed to provide funding for future year improvements over the period 2021-28 from HRA Capital Budgets, which would be reported to Full Council in February each year as part of the HRA budget.

212. COMMUNITY AND HOUSING SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the Community and Housing Services Sub-Committee forward work programme which would be updated accordingly.
