

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE HOUSING SERVICES SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 19 JANUARY 2021 AT 6.30 P.M. VIA VIDEO LINK.

<u>ACTION</u>														
	Present:	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Ms D. Smith</td> <td>Elected Member (Chairperson)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mr J. Calderwood</td> <td>Elected Member</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mr J. O'Donnell</td> <td>Elected Member</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ms L. Breeze</td> <td>Elected Member</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mrs K. Brown</td> <td>Elected Member</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cllr. M McNair</td> <td>Elected Member</td> </tr> </table>	Ms D. Smith	Elected Member (Chairperson)	Mr J. Calderwood	Elected Member	Mr J. O'Donnell	Elected Member	Ms L. Breeze	Elected Member	Mrs K. Brown	Elected Member	Cllr. M McNair	Elected Member
Ms D. Smith	Elected Member (Chairperson)													
Mr J. Calderwood	Elected Member													
Mr J. O'Donnell	Elected Member													
Ms L. Breeze	Elected Member													
Mrs K. Brown	Elected Member													
Cllr. M McNair	Elected Member													
		<p>Quorum required: 3 members (excluding co-opted) Quorum achieved: Yes</p>												
In Attendance:	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Mr J. Farrell</td> <td>Head of Housing Services</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mr J. Devlin</td> <td>Acting Housing Services Manager</td> </tr> </table>	Mr J. Farrell	Head of Housing Services	Mr J. Devlin	Acting Housing Services Manager									
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1.	Apologies	Apologies were received from Mrs K. Tennant and Mr P. Shiach.												
2.	Chairperson's Remarks	There were no Chairperson's remarks.												
3.	Declaration of Interest	Cllr McNair declared that she would not be participating in any discussion regarding possible expansion of the Council's District Heating Scheme to the tenemental flats at Dumbarton Road contained in the general maintenance report. It was agreed that Cllr. McNair leave the meeting during that discussion point.												
4.	Business carried over from last meeting	There was no business carried over, with any updates contained in the reports presented.												
5.	Correspondence	There was no correspondence												
6.	Q3 2020/21 Void & Lettings Report	The Head of Housing Services and the Housing Services Manager ran over the report circulated prior to the meeting, with the following points raised or noted:												
	•	It was noted that information relating to the number of Housing Management and Maintenance days was missing for the month of December 2020. This is in light of our switch to a new Housing system and the current inability of the new system to provide this data. Although not required for the ARC, this information is useful and work is ongoing to ensure that the new system can provide this going forward.												

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It was noted that the number of voids and re-lets had increased significantly during quarter 3, with the total number of lets for the year now sitting at 45, up from 23 at the end of quarter 2. This links directly to the easing of the Covid-19 lockdown measures and moving house now being allowed under all Covid tiers.• Letting times have reduced significantly from quarter 2, with the figure for the year to date sitting at 32.4 calendar days, down from 45.83 calendar days at the end of quarter 2. This improvement is down to better organisation of void works and contractor liaison in line with Covid guidance. It was however noted that we are still affected by restrictions on voids such as only one contractor being allowed in at any given time and a continuing shortage of parts and materials. <p>No further points were raised or noted.</p> <p>7. Q3 2020/21 Allocations Report</p> <p>The Head of Housing Services covered the report issued prior to the meeting, with the following points raised or noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It was highlighted that some information in relation to non-ARC letting statistics was not possible to report as the new housing system was not yet configured to report this. Work is ongoing to ensure this information is available going forward.• It was noted that despite the pandemic lockdown, there had been no negative impact on refusals of housing. <p>No further questions or points were raised.</p> <p>8. Q2 2020/21 Anti-social Behaviour & Estate Management Report</p> <p>The Head of Housing Services ran through the report issued prior to the meeting, with no points raised or noted.</p> <p>9. Q3 2020/21 Arrears Management Report</p> <p>The Head of Housing Services ran over the report issued prior to the meeting, with the following points noted or raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It was noted that gross arrears rose by 0.16% (£7,007) between September and December 2020. This is in light of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic coupled with a sharp rise in arrears during the month of December 2020 (arrears rose £6997 between Nov and Dec 2020).• 52% of the rise during the quarter was due to an increase of £3,612 in former tenant arrears. This is linked to the increase in void properties during quarter 3 as highlighted in the voids and allocations reports. Going forward, it is hoped that our new shared Tenancy Sustainment

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	<p>and Welfare Rights Officers will help reduce the impact of tenants leaving their homes with large rent arrears.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Although an increase over the quarter, progress in arrears recovery continues to be made, with a drop of £6,293 in gross arrears noted between October and November 2020.• Resources continue to be diverted into arrears management and it is hoped that further reductions in arrears will occur during quarter 4. There is no doubt though that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is hampering all landlords' abilities to manage rent arrears. <p>The remainder of the report was noted with no further questions asked. The policy was unanimously approved.</p> <p>10. Q3 2020/21 Universal Credit Report</p> <p>The Head of Housing Services ran over the report issued prior to the meeting, with the following points noted or raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It was noted that in line with an increase in arrears during quarter 3, that the amount of Universal Credit (UC) arrears had also risen. Although the number of UC cases had fallen by 17 during the quarter, arrears rose by £2,214.• A committee member asked whether the drop of 17 cases was accurate. It was confirmed that within the restrictions of the manual data entered into our housing systems, that this figure could be considered accurate. It was noted that a check of our figures takes place against the figures held by the DWP at the time of reporting to ensure accuracy as far as is possible. There may however be tenants on UC who we do not know about as the rent element is paid direct to them and they are not on the DWP portal.• It was highlighted that the average UC arrears figure had however dropped for the second quarter in succession, standing at £602.91. This is pleasing as is the fact that the gap between average UC arrears and other arrears shrank to £164.95 during the same timeframe. If this continues a reduction in UC arrears may again be seen going forward. <p>The remainder of the report was noted with no further questions asked.</p> <p>11. Policy Review – Mobility and Mutual Exchange Policy</p> <p>The Head of Housing Services ran over the policy issued prior to the meeting, with the following points noted or raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It was noted that this was a minor review of an existing policy with no major changes to context other than incorporating Housing Services instead of Housing Management.• A committee member highlighted that the policy allows refusal if the applicant has arrears of one month or more. It was then asked

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<p><u>ACTION</u></p> <p>JF</p> <p>JF</p>	<p>whether or not we should refuse an exchange application if the applicant had any rent arrears at all. It was clarified that refusal was in line with the allocations policy in order to avoid any discrimination between housing applicants and mutual exchange applicants. The allocation policy requires that so long as a reasonable arrears agreement is in place and has been kept to for at least the last three months, then the application can be accepted. It was agreed that we check this position out with our solicitors, although all agreed that they were happy with the policy.</p> <p>The Policy was unanimously approved.</p> <p>12. Policy Review – Pets Policy</p> <p>The Head of Housing Services ran over the policy issued prior to the meeting, with the following points noted or raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It was highlighted that the policy now included a section on keeping a dog within a multistorey flat.• Discussion took place regarding the above addition and all agreed that the decision to expand the term canine helper to include keeping a dog for health and wellbeing reasons was a sensible addition. <p>No further points were raised and the policy was unanimously approved.</p> <p>13. Young Care Leavers Housing Protocol</p> <p>The Head of Housing Services ran over the report issued prior to the meeting, with the following points noted or raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The report contained updated information from West Dunbartonshire Council on the protocol which the sub-committee had previously agreed not to adopt.• Following discussion, the sub-committee agreed to stick by their original decision and not adopt the policy. This was in view of the fact that existing rents would have to fund any rent abatement for the care leavers and that if numbers increased in the future this could significantly impact rent increases, It was however noted that the protocol was well meaning and could work should an independent funding stream become available in the future• It was agreed that the Head of Housing Services communicate this to West Dunbartonshire Council highlighting the above points. <p>No further points were raised.</p>
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<p><u>ACTION</u></p> <p>JD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Radnor Park Communal Smoke Alarms – following discussion the sub-committee unanimously approved the quote of c. [REDACTED] from City Technical Services to install smoke alarm systems within common areas at Radnor Park. <p>The remainder of the report was noted, with no further points raised.</p> <p>15. ARC Statistical Reports</p> <p>It was noted that Energy Performance Certificates had now been received for all properties where compliance was previously unknown. The Association now has data available for all properties with regards to energy performance.</p> <p>The remainder of the report was noted with no questions asked</p> <p>16. Cyclical & Major Repairs Reports</p> <p>The Acting Housing Services Manager ran over the reports circulated prior to the meeting, with the following points raised or noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It was highlighted that due to Covid-19 restrictions, major repair works had been largely affected. This has meant that most programmed works were halted. Those contracts for which work had commenced were placed on hold due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.• The Sub-Committee approved a ceiling budget of c. [REDACTED] for the creation of specification documents in relation to stone cleaning contract.• The Sub-Committee approved the procurement of the Radnor Park windows and doors contract via the [REDACTED]• It was noted that cyclical works remain on target, with the exception of the gas safety check failures noted in the report caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdown. <p>17. Carbon Management Report</p> <p>The Housing Services Manager referred to the report distributed prior to the meeting and noted that due to COVID progress had slowed with regards to most targets set out within the report.</p> <p>The remainder of the report was noted with no questions asked</p> <p>18. Contractors Performance Report</p> <p>The Housing Services Manager referred to the report and noted those contractors for which performance had fallen below the 90% target. It was stated that COVID-19 appeared to be a major contributing factor with regards to the reduced performance.</p>
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<p><u>ACTION</u></p>	<p>The remainder of the report was noted with no questions asked.</p> <p>19. Contract Register Report The Housing Services Manager referred to the report distributed prior to the meeting and noted that the report would be a standard item for future meetings.</p> <p>The content of the report was noted with no questions asked.</p> <p>20. Training Session – Contracts Register Report The Head of Housing Services and the Housing Services Manager provided a short training session to the sub-committee on what to look out for in the contracts register report.</p> <p>21. Agree Next Training Session The Sub-committee further training topic will be agreed in advance of the next meeting.</p> <p>22. Date and Time of Next Meeting The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 20 April 2021 at 6.30pm.</p> <p><u>Meeting closed</u></p> <p>APPROVED</p> <p>PROPOSED</p> <p>SECONDED</p> <p style="text-align: right;">JF/JD 29/01/2021</p>
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