

# STIRLING COUNCIL

**MINUTES of MEETING of the ENVIRONMENT & HOUSING COMMITTEE held in the COUNCIL CHAMBERS, OLD VIEWFORTH, STIRLING on TUESDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2014 at 11.00am**

## **Present**

Councillor Danny GIBSON (Convener)

Councillor Martin EARL  
Councillor Jim THOMSON

Councillor Violet WEIR

## **In Attendance**

Richard Barron, Senior Access Officer, Environment  
Tony Cain, Head of Housing & Customer Services  
Stephanie Cameron, Licensing Team Leader, Economy, Planning & Regulation  
Elaine Fleming, Performance & Improvement Adviser, Chief Executive's Office  
Les Goodfellow, Head of Environment  
Angela Heaney, Sustainable Development Co-ordinator, Environment  
Gavin Kennedy, Strategy & Development Officer, Housing & Customer Service  
John McCallum, Development Officer, Housing & Customer Service  
Alison McMaster, Service Development Officer, Environment  
Claire Milne, Principal Planning Officer, Economy, Planning & Regulation  
Nicole Paterson, Land Services Manager, Environment  
Kevin Robertson, Head of Economy, Planning & Regulation  
Gregor Wightman, Property & Private Sector Housing Manager, Housing & Customer Service  
Ian Young, Team Leader (Bridge and Flood Maintenance), Environment  
Jean Houston, Committee Officer, Governance & Resources (Clerk)

## **EH132 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Neil Benny and Councillor Mark Ruskell.

## **EH133 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

The Convener announced that this was the last Committee meeting that Les Goodfellow would be attending prior to leaving Stirling Council. The Convener thanked him, on behalf of the Committee, for all his work and contribution to the Service over the years.

## **EH134 URGENT BUSINESS BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE CHAIR**

The Convener asked that a joint report by the Head of Assets & Support and Head of Housing & Customer Service on the acquisition of the former fire station site, Callander be considered as an item of urgent business on the grounds that the proposed acquisition may be jeopardised if negotiations were delayed.

As the report was exempt, it was agreed to consider this report after the final item on the agenda.

## **EH135 MINUTES OF MEETING**

### **Environment & Housing Committee – 5 June 2014**

#### **Decision**

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2014 as a correct record of proceedings.

## **EH136 STIRLING COUNCIL'S CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION STRATEGY**

The report by the Head of Environment advised that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 5<sup>th</sup> Assessment Report was clear on the causes, impacts and mitigation options of climate change, emphasising that the solutions were available and affordable, but that action needed to be taken urgently.

In January 2007, and again in May 2008, Stirling Council signed Scotland's Climate Change Declaration, which acknowledged that climate change was occurring and human activities were having a significant negative and potentially dangerous influence.

The core legislation driving activity on climate change in the public sector was the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, with one of its three Public Bodies' Duties requiring local authorities to take action to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

A report to Environment & Housing Committee on 6 February 2014 highlighted that adapting to climate change was the missing piece in the Council's Sustainable Development Framework. A Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, split into 3 parts (Summary, Action Plan and Main Issues Report), had been drafted to address this gap and meet the requirement for adaptation action in the Public Bodies' Climate Change Duties. This was attached as Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

The Strategy focused on building capacity across services by awareness raising, improving understanding and developing appropriate policies and plans. The Action Plan set a base line for reporting progress in future; however this would need to be updated to take account of the organisational review that was underway.

Stirling Council had been invited to sign the EU Covenant of Mayors' Initiative on Adaptation to Climate Change to profile the Council's endeavours to adapt to the impacts of climate change and benefit from sharing best practice, learning and expertise with other participants across Europe. The Committee Members agreed that Council should approve the signing of the Covenant.

In response to a member's questions, officers agreed to examine where governance arrangements for Climate Change Adaptation would sit within the new management structure. Officers also provided information on the timescales required to deliver flood alleviation and new defence options, with particular reference to Aberfoyle. Updates would be reported to Committee as developments progressed.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed to:-

1. adopt the draft Climate Change Adaptation Strategy attached at Appendix 1 as Stirling Council's response to the challenges and opportunities of our changing climate;
2. recommend that Council signs the Covenant of Mayors Initiative on Adaptation to Climate Change, known as the EU Mayors Adapt Initiative; and
3. note that Council, on 9 October 2014, would make a decision on whether or not the Provost would attend the Covenant of Mayors' Signature Ceremony in Brussels on 16 October 2014.

(Reference: Report by Head of Environment dated 18 September 2014, submitted)

## **EH137 STIRLING LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN: DEVELOPMENT PLAN SCHEME**

On 24 September 2014, Stirling Council gave notice of the adoption of the Stirling Local Development Plan. At a Special Meeting of Stirling Council on 18 August 2014, it was agreed to carry out an early review of the Stirling Local Development Plan and its Spatial Strategy relative to the housing land requirement for the Stirling Core Area. The Council also agreed to prepare and bring forward a refreshed spatial framework for wind farms which meets the requirements of the Scottish Government's planning policy and advice.

This report by the Head of Economy, Planning & Regulation set out the process of reviewing the Local Development Plan and sought approval for the 2014 Development Plan Scheme (Appendix 1 to the submitted report).

The review would principally focus on two issues: the need to address any housing land shortfall and a refreshed spatial framework for wind farms. Details of the process of reviewing the spatial framework and the necessary consultation would be outlined in a report to the Environment and Housing Committee on 20 November 2014.

In conjunction with the review of the Local Development Plan, an opportunity would be taken to update Supplementary Guidance on Housing in the Countryside with regard to the designation of 'small settlements'; Residential Alterations and Extensions, in particular in relation to the siting and design of residential chimney installations for wood burning stoves/flues; Wind Farms and Wind Turbines and the removal of green belt protection; and Unconventional Gas in relation to assessment criteria and methodologies to guide prospective developers.

A Member suggested that a cross-party working group be established to oversee the review.

## **Decision**

The Committee agreed to:

1. approve the 2014 Development Plan Scheme at Appendix 1 and noted the future stages and timescales for the review of the Local Development Plan; and
2. submit the 2014 Development Plan Scheme to Scottish Ministers.

(Reference: Report by Head of Economy, Planning & Regulation dated 19 August 2014, submitted)

## **EH138 PERFORMANCE AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES PROGRESS REPORT**

This report presented the latest information on the performance indicators, and on progress in implementing the strategic priorities and projects overseen by the Environment and Housing Committee.

Five Performance indicators were currently reported as 'hot spots' – these were:

Building warrant applications first response within 20 working days

Absence for Environment

Household recycling tonnage

Percentage of customer satisfaction with Housing repairs

Void Housing properties re-let within 28 days

Members commented that some of the information provided was three months old and asked if officers could bring more up-to-date information to Committee when available.

Officers responded to Members' questions regarding: the level of household waste recycling and composting; the number of tenants normally surveyed on customer satisfaction; and the mechanisms that can be put in place to ensure that tenants vacated properties in good condition. Tenants were currently billed for repairs where appropriate.

In response to questions, officers agreed to provide Members with an update on the roll out of food waste and cardboard collections to the rural areas.

## **Decision**

The Committee:-

1. noted the revised reporting format at Appendix 1 – section 3, which now reported progress on the revised set of Senior Management Objectives that had been developed by the Senior Management Team for 2014-15 onwards;
2. considered the performance of reported indicators (Appendix 1 – Section 1 and 2); and
3. considered progress on the Senior Management Objectives through which the Strategic Priorities and projects overseen by the Environment and Housing Committee are being delivered (Appendix 1 – Section 3).

(Reference: Joint Report by the Chief Executive, Head of Housing & Customer Service, Head of Environment and Head of Economy, Planning & Regulation dated 19 September 2014, submitted)

#### **EH139 HOUSING PERFORMANCE 2013/14**

This report by the Head of Housing & Customer Service provided an overview of performance across key areas of service delivery for the financial year 2013/14.

In response to questions, the Head of Housing & Customer Service confirmed that the service had reviewed the Responsive Repairs procedure in consultation with tenants and it was anticipated that this would improve the response especially to multiple emergencies. Recording systems had improved and there was now a better capacity to record completion information accurately.

Officers also confirmed that steps were in place to ensure that properties would comply with the new Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing by 2020.

##### **Decision:**

The Committee noted the contents of the Housing Service Performance Report, April 2013-March 2014.

(Reference: Report by Head of Housing & Customer Service dated 21 August 2014, submitted)

#### **EH140 HOUSING VOID PROPERTY MANAGEMENT**

The report by the Head of Housing & Customer Service provided background to the recent fluctuations in performance around housing void property turnover within 28 working days. Whilst performance was not adequate, the Service ranked 4<sup>th</sup> among 26 Scottish local authorities who provided comparative data.

The fluctuations were mainly due to an increasing number of void properties being managed and the condition of these properties. Mechanisms were being considered to help identify properties with damage before tenants vacated them, and to ensure that tenants only transferred within the stock if properties were being left in satisfactory condition.

##### **Decision**

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

(Reference: Report by Head of Housing & Customer Service dated 26 August 2014, submitted)

#### **EH141 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT – PROJECTED OUTTURN 2014/15**

##### **Housing Revenue Account**

The projected outturn for 2014/15 showed expenditure of £19.29 million against a budget of £19.28 million.

The level of balances retained on the Housing Revenue Account was £236,000. The level of retained balance equated to around 1.25% of the gross spend in the year.

### **Housing Investment Programme**

The 2014/15 Housing Investment programme budget was £21.31 million. The net spend on the programme was projected at around £21.66 million. This was £356,000 over the original budget, largely due to slippage on the Kitchen Replacement programme in 2013/14.

It was proposed that the Property Purchase budget was increased by £263,000 to reflect additional finance available from the Strategic Housing Account. Further detail was provided in paragraph **Error! Reference source not found.** of the submitted report.

The level of new borrowing required for the current year was expected to be slightly over budget at around £11.41 million.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed to:-

1. note that expenditure on the Housing Revenue Account was £19.29 million for 2014/15;
2. note that the borrowing requirement for 2014/15 was £11.41 million;
3. note that year end retained balances were £236,000; and
4. approve the increase in the Property Purchase budget by £263,000.

(Reference: Joint Report by Head of Housing & Customer Service dated 18 September 2014, submitted)

## **EH142 APPROVAL OF THE PUBLIC REALM IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS 2014/15**

The Council had agreed as part of its Capital budget for 2014/15 an item for public realm improvements amounting to £400,000.

This report by the Head of Environment provided members with a number of public realm improvements that had been identified by officers from Environment Services that could be advanced with this funding. Officers in Land Services and Roads Service had been working with a number of community groups on a range of environmental projects, including park master plans, environmental improvements and landscape initiatives that could benefit from additional funding.

Appendix 1 to the submitted report set out £400,000 of projects that the Committee was asked to approve to be progressed.

Members commented that they had not been consulted on the proposed public realm improvements and asked officers to consult all Elected Members if a similar exercise was to be undertaken in future years.

## **Decision**

The Committee agreed:-

1. that Environment Services co-ordinate the delivery of £400,000 of public realm environmental improvement works; and
2. to approve the £400,000 of projects that were set out in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Head of Environment dated 19 September 2014, submitted)

## **EH143 PETITION – PAVEMENTS FIT FOR PURPOSE – STRATHBLANE COMMUNITY PATHS NETWORK**

In February 2013 Strathblane Community Council had presented the Council with a petition entitled 'Pavements Fit for Purpose'. The main issues of concern were:

- The condition of the footway on the A81 to Blanefield Care Home;
- The condition of the footway along A81 Milngavie Road to the south of Strathblane;
- The lack of footway along the A891;
- The limited footway on the A81 by Edenkilm Place.

At the Petitions Panel of 7 February 2013:

1. The Head of Environment made a commitment to address the concerns raised on the identified footways; and
2. The Panel and community representatives present agreed to a proposal by the Head of Environment to participate in a consultation project to gain a better understanding of where people walked in and around Strathblane and to assess where there were gaps in the network to help with prioritising future work.

The report by the Head of Environment set out details of the consultations process and actions that had taken place to improve the Strathblane Community Paths Network.

'Living Streets' Community Path Audit training had been provided to interested members of the community to help them assess a route, establish what problems existed as well as possible solutions, and how to put the findings into a report to take advantage of funding opportunities. The Senior Access Officer confirmed to members that the service intended to provide any appropriate assistance with a bid for funding to Sustrans.

## **Decision**

The Committee agreed:

1. to note the contents of the report;

2. that officers would continue to review the draft Plan with the community and report progress to the petitioners; and
3. to delegate to officers any appropriate actions within allocated budgets.

(Reference: Report by Head of Environment Services dated 18 September 2014, submitted)

#### **EH144 LICENSING: PROPOSED LICENSING REGIME FOR BOAT HIRERS**

Following the sinking of a passenger carrying boat on Loch Lomond in 2012, the Marine Accident Investigation Branch had recommended that Stirling Council establish a boating licensing system for inland waters falling under the Council's area of responsibility.

The report by the Head of Economy, Planning & Regulation set out the proposed licensing regime for boat hirers, which had been developed in consultation with Argyll & Bute and West Dunbartonshire Councils and, if approved, would be applied consistently by the three local authorities.

As part of the licensing system, small passenger boats carrying fewer than 12 people would need to be inspected regularly. The Licensing Team Leader confirmed that there would be an approved list of agencies and adequate capacity to carry out these inspections.

It was not planned to roll out this licensing system to other inland waters in the area at present.

#### **Decision**

The Committee agreed:-

1. in principle to a resolution requiring boat hirers on Loch Lomond to be licensed (unless they were already licensed by either West Dunbartonshire or Argyll & Bute Councils). This was subject to a consultation being carried out and the outcome being reported back to the Committee for consideration at a later date; and
2. to set the same fee and conditions for the Boat Hire Licensing as West Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Councils.

(Reference: Report by Head of Environment Services, dated 22 May 2014, submitted)

#### **EH145 FLOODING: FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PLANNING UPDATE**

The Environment and Housing Committee was previously updated on the work being carried out for the production of the Flood Risk Management Strategies and Local Flood Risk Management Plans at its meeting of 5 June 2014. At that time the Characterisation Reports had been completed and draft initial Objectives had been set for each Potentially Vulnerable Area (PVA). A summary of the formulation process was provided in Appendix 1 to the submitted report.



The Characterisation and initial Objectives (set out in Appendix 2) had now been agreed at officer level and endorsed by the Forth Local Plan District (LPD) partnership.

For each Objective the Long List of Actions had been reviewed and assessed by SEPA, their consultants and flood officers from Stirling Council, and subsequently reduced to an initial Short List of Actions. Appendix 3 to the submitted report showed the Objectives and Short List of Actions for Potentially Vulnerable Areas in the Stirling Council area. A large scale copy of Appendix 3 had been displayed in the Members' Lounge.

Appendix 4 contained the Objectives and Short List of Actions for Potentially Vulnerable Areas outwith the Stirling Council area but within the Forth Local Plan District, for which Stirling Council was Lead Local Authority.

The Team Leader (Bridge and Flood Maintenance) reported that Stirling Council was unlikely to be in a position to take forward and commission a flood alleviation scheme, funded by the Scottish Government, within the first 6-year cycle of the Flood Risk Management Plan. It was anticipated that many of the measures would require further studies to take forward schemes in the next planning cycle and these studies would require revenue funding.

As there was a considerable amount of information to be considered within the report and appendices, officers were asked to arrange a briefing for all elected members on the contents of the report.

### **Decision**

The Committee approved the "Short List of Actions" for the Stirling Council area, as set out in Appendix 3 to the submitted report, for further appraisal.

(Reference: Report by Head of Environment Services dated 19 September 2014, submitted)

## **EH146 INTRODUCTION OF A CARRIER BAG CHARGE FOR SCOTLAND**

The report by the Head of Environment advised that the Scottish Government was introducing legislation that would require retailers (food and non-food) to charge a minimum levy of 5p for each single-use carrier bag (including paper and those made from plant based materials) which they handed out to shoppers from 20 October 2014. The charge would apply for in-store or online shopping where goods were sold or delivered into Scotland

Whilst the net proceeds from the charge belonged to businesses, the Scottish Government was keen to see these donated to good causes.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed to note the introduction of a carrier bag charge throughout Scotland from 20 October 2014

(Reference: Report by Head of Environment Services dated 19 September 2014, submitted)

## **EH147 SHORT SCOTTISH SECURE TENANCY POLICY**

The Housing Service had issued Short Scottish Secure Tenancies (SSSTs) for many years, but there was no specific policy document on their use. This had been previously covered by guidelines on SSSTs within the Estate Management Procedures, which lacked clarity on some practical aspects of the process for using and managing and monitoring SSSTs.

The proposed policy formalised the current use of SSSTs and provided clearer guidelines on the use and management of SSSTs.

Consultation on the policy had taken place with the Housing Advisory Group and a number of amendments had been incorporated into the proposed policy.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed to approve the Short Scottish Secure Tenancy Policy as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

(Reference: Report by Head of Environment Services dated 26 August 2014, submitted)

## **EH148 SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR SCRUTINY: RENT ARREARS**

The Scottish Housing Regulator had completed a short piece of focussed scrutiny on current tenants' rent arrears in response to concerns raised in the Council's Assurance and Improvement Plan 2013-16. The Scrutiny had focussed on the Council's processes and performance around gathering its tenants' rents.

The scrutiny activity was a low intensity inquiry carried out week beginning 11 November 2013, with the Scottish Housing Regulator visiting Bannockburn Local Office for one day on 12 November 2013.

Whilst such concerns had been raised regarding the Council's performance around rent arrears, the report from the regulator included performance information highlighting improvement over the past few years, with net rent arrears as a % of rent reducing consecutively year on year.

The findings from the scrutiny exercise contained in the report highlighted some concerns around the Council's management of its rent arrears. The main issues identified were:-

- Poor note keeping and monitoring of cases;
- Standard letters lacked clear titling, personalisation and information on the arrears escalation policy; and
- Repayment arrangements were set up and reviewed without full analysis of affordability.

The findings from the Scottish Housing Regulator Scrutiny had been incorporated into the rent arrears action plan as set out in Appendix 2 to the submitted report. The action plan detailed a full review of the arrears procedures with particular focus on:-

- Improving information and case notes on Northgate;

- Improving standard letters;
- Streamlining the Additional Housing Support stage in the procedures; and
- Streamlining the Head of Service Stage in the procedures.

This review was complete and changes to procedures would be followed from the beginning of October 2014.

Members questioned approval of the revised standard letters and officers were asked to consult the HAG on the improved standard letters to tenants in rent arrears in order to get tenants' perspective.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed to note:

1. the contents of the Scottish Housing Regulator scrutiny; and
2. the contents and completed action plan set out in Appendix 2 to the submitted report.

(Reference: Report by Head of Environment Services undated, submitted)

## **EH149 HRA GUIDANCE & FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

In March 2014 the Scottish Government issued guidance on the role, operation and financial transparency of Housing Revenue Accounts (HRA) operated by local authorities across Scotland. Much of the material in the guidance reinforced the principles of the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

An initial inspection of the guidance showed that the Stirling Council HRA is generally operating in compliance with the new guidance. Any areas of concern were relatively small in terms of financial impact to the HRA.

Officers intended to undertake a full audited compliance review into the requirements of the guidance and would report the findings to Committee at a later date. In any cases where the HRA was not fully compliant, this would be recorded and actions taken to resolve this. The Service was confident that there were no areas of concern that would cause a significant non-compliance with the Guidance.

In response to questions, the Head of Housing & Customer Service confirmed that the Service did charge non-tenants who were benefitting from HRA services wherever possible, i.e. shared services and the repair and maintenance of common areas. Such obligations were generally contained within the title deeds of non-tenants' properties.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed:-

1. to note that the operational guidance reinforced the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 and subsequent Acts;

2. to instruct officers of the Council to adhere to both the spirit and the letter of the guidance; and
3. to instruct the Head of Housing to:
  - a. undertake a review of the Housing Revenue Account to assess compliance with the Guidance and identify areas requiring corrective action;
  - b. commission an independent audit of the review; and
  - c. report back to Committee with the findings of the review.

(Reference: Report by Head of Environment Services dated 18 September 2014, submitted)

## **EH150 HOUSING ALLOCATIONS: REGISTERED FOSTER CARERS**

On 23 May 2014, the Housing Advisory Group discussed a proposal to amend the Allocation Policy to award additional priority to Stirling Council tenants who were registered foster carers.

At present where a Council tenant was a registered foster carer and would like to foster an additional child, Social Services required them to have a spare bedroom available before placing the child. The current Allocation Policy only gave an applicant additional points for a larger property if they were actually overcrowded (i.e. after the child was placed). This meant in practice that a foster carer got no additional priority to gain access to a larger property and a child could not be placed with a foster carer. This represented a no-win situation with little scope for a way forward under current policies.

It was agreed that officers carried out a consultation exercise on the proposed amendment and brought forward a report to the first Housing Advisory Group meeting after the summer recess.

A consultation process with registered tenants' organisations, tenant panel members and applicants on the housing list was carried out during July and August 2014. The results of the consultation process showed that overall, 68.7% of respondents supported the proposed amendment to the policy.

The proposed amendment would recognise the role of foster carers within the Allocation Policy and complement the Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy. The Housing Service intended to carry out a review of the impact of the amendment to the Allocation Policy after one year.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed:-

1. to award 1000 management points to any existing Stirling Council tenants who had been assessed and accepted as suitable to foster and where the only obstacle to final approval for fostering or placing an additional child, was the need for a larger property;

2. that the points would only be available for the allocation areas for which the applicant had already been awarded social inclusion points; and
3. that the points would be applicable until the applicant had received two offers of housing, after which the points would be removed.

(Reference: Report by Head of Housing & Customer Service undated, submitted)

## **EH151 TACKLING FUEL POVERTY – AN OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME A MEMBER OF OUR POWER**

Tackling fuel poverty was a strategic priority for the Council.

The report by the Head of Housing & Customer Service advised that a unique opportunity had arisen for the Council to become a member of Our Power, a new Industrial Provident Society for community benefit that was being set up to address market failure in the energy sector.

Our Power would supply domestic energy services to customers and communities of member organisations in Scotland and North East England. The Our Power Business Plan was attached as Appendix to the submitted report.

It was anticipated that by becoming a member of Our Power, Council tenants could save up to £103 per year compared with the standard tariffs offered by the six largest energy suppliers.

The intention was that a licensed energy supply company would be established and set up in order for Our Power to go live by the end of November 2014 and that a successful controlled market entry would be achieved by the end of February 2015. A one-off membership fee of £5,625 would be payable.

In response to questions from members regarding Our Power's approach to the equalisation of tariffs for pre-payment customers and the use of smart meters, the Strategy & Development Officer confirmed that Our Power aimed to remove any cost differentiation to the customer between online direct debit tariffs and pay as you go. This would enable households on lower income to get best use of their energy spend. The Strategy & Development Officer offered to circulate members with further information on the equalisation of tariffs along with a copy of frequently asked questions and responses on all aspects of Our Power.

He also confirmed that whilst there may be potential for Our Power to become available to the wider community in the longer term, their initial target customers were tenants in social housing.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed:-

1. that the Council, as a landlord, should become a member of Our Power; and
2. to approve a payment of £5,625 from the Strategic Housing Account being a one-off membership fee based on current stock levels at 31 July 2014.

(Reference: Report by Head of Housing & Customer Service dated 17 September 2014, submitted)

## **EH152 FORMER FIRE STATION SITE, MAIN STREET, CALLANDER**

A joint report by the Head of Assets & Support and Head of Housing & Customer Service advised that the site of the former fire station in Callander had been marketed on a number of occasions over the past 12 years without a sale being concluded.

The Council had made several attempts to negotiate an acquisition for affordable housing over the years but without success. The site had been put back on the market recently with a closing date of Wednesday 24 September, seeking clean offers.

In order to secure the site to meet significant demand for smaller affordable housing in the area, officers had indicated to the seller that the Council would be willing to acquire the site at a price determined by the District Valuer and subject to committee approval. The Valuation Report was attached at Appendix 2 to the submitted report.

The seller indicated on Friday 26 September that they are happy to accept this offer. It was proposed that the acquisition would be funded from uncommitted funds held in the Strategic Housing Account. Final details of the development of the site would be approved in consultation with partners.

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority had been made aware of the intention to acquire the site and had previously been supportive of attempts to secure it for affordable housing.

### **Decision**

The Committee agreed:-

1. to acquire the site for the Housing Revenue Account at the price identified in the Valuation Report; and
2. that the acquisition would be funded from uncommitted resources in the Strategic Housing Account.

(Reference: Joint Report by Head of Housing & Customer Service and Head of Assets & Support dated 26 September 2014, submitted)

The Convener closed the Meeting at 12.50 pm