

MINUTE
of
CABINET

Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 17 September 2015.

Present:

Councillor Jim Fletcher (Leader)	Councillor Alan Lafferty
Councillor Tony Buchanan (Deputy Leader)	Councillor Ian McAlpine
Councillor Danny Devlin	Councillor Mary Montague
Councillor Elaine Green	Councillor Vincent Waters

Councillor Fletcher, Leader, in the Chair

Attending:

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Andy Cahill, Director of Environment; Margaret McCrossan, Head of Accountancy (Chief Financial Officer); Louise Pringle, Head of Customer and Business Change Services; Louisa Mahon, Corporate Communications Manager; Steven Skelly, Revenues and Business Support Manager; and Paul O'Neil, Committee Services Officer.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1719. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

RENEWAL OF PRESSURED AREA STATUS (EASTWOOD)

1720. The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Environment, seeking approval for the renewal of the current Pressured Area Status (PAS) for the 4 areas of Busby/Clarkston/Netherlee, Thornliebank/Giffnock, Eaglesham and Newton Mearns, which together formed the Eastwood housing settlement area. A copy of the finalised report outlining the proposal for PAS was appended to the report.

Whilst noting that the designation of PAS was contained within the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and allowed designation of part of a local authority's area as a 'pressured area', the report highlighted that the objective of the status was to safeguard existing social rented stock where there were already serious shortages in homes available, and the exercise of Right to Buy in these areas was likely to worsen the situation.

The report explained that the Council's first PAS application for the Eastwood settlement area was approved by Scottish Ministers on 5 October 2005 and renewed for a further 5 years by the Scottish Government in October 2010. The current designation expired in October 2015 and approval was now being sought for a further period until the abolition of Right to Buy in Scotland came into effect in August 2016. Details of the criteria that had to be met for a PAS application to be successful were outlined in the report.

The Cabinet approved the proposed extension of pressured area status for the Eastwood housing settlement area for a further period, until the abolition of Right to Buy in Scotland came into effect in August 2016.

WELFARE REFORM CONTINGENCY FUND AND UPDATE

1721. Under reference to the Minute of the meeting of 4 September 2014 (Page 1137, Item 1187 refers), when it was agreed amongst other things to approve an allocation of £281,000 to be drawn from the Welfare Reform contingency sum provided in the 2014/15 Council estimates, the Cabinet considered a report by the Deputy Chief Executive, seeking approval to use resources from the Welfare Reform contingency provision in order to extend funding of the ongoing administration and staffing costs required to administer the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF). Approval was also sought to extend funding of a number of temporary positions until March 2017 in order to mitigate against the impact of Welfare Reform in the Council's frontline services, particularly around benefit, financial and welfare services.

The report highlighted the continued progress that had been made in mitigating and preparing for the impact of Welfare Reform, including the commencement of Universal Credit in East Renfrewshire in February 2016, and outlined the structural changes which had taken place since the retirement of the Head of Revenue Services and also the preparations for the TUPE transfer of staff to the Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) in December 2015.

In addition, the report sought approval for allocations being drawn down from the Welfare Reform contingency sum provided in the 2015/16 revenue estimates, and to cover the shortfall in national allocations for the administration of the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF). Furthermore, approval was sought for the use of resources from the Welfare Reform contingency provision to extend the funding of the SWF and temporary posts, mainly located within Customer First, until March 2017 which would be taken forward through the budgetary estimates process for 2016/17.

The report also proposed the continued provision of additional grant funding of £40,000 in 2016/17 to support East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) in its work towards mitigating the impact of Welfare Reform.

The Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the continued progress which had been made in mitigating and preparing for the impact of Welfare Reform, including the commencement of Universal Credit in East Renfrewshire in February 2016;
- (b) noted the structural changes which had taken place since the retirement of the Head of Revenue Services and also the preparations for the TUPE transfer of staff to the Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) in December 2015;
- (c) approved allocations of £68,000 being drawn down from the Welfare Reform contingency sum provided in the 2015/16 revenue estimates, and an estimated sum of £71,500 in 2016/17, to cover the shortfall in national allocations for the administration of the Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF);
- (d) approved the use of resources from the Welfare Reform contingency provision to extend the funding of the SWF and temporary posts, mainly located within Customer First, until March 2017 which would be taken forward through the budgetary estimates process for 2016/17; and

- (e) agreed to continue provision of additional grant funding of £40,000 in 2016/17 to support East Renfrewshire Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) in its work towards mitigating the impact of Welfare Reform.

CHAIR

