

**MINUTES of MEETING of EXECUTIVE held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, KILMORY,  
LOCHGILPHEAD  
on THURSDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 2011**

**Present:** Councillor Dick Walsh (Chair)

Councillor Rory Colville	Councillor Ellen Morton
Councillor Robin Currie	Councillor Gary Mulvaney
Councillor Vivien Dance	Councillor Andrew Nisbet
Councillor Alison Hay	Councillor Elaine Robertson
Councillor Duncan MacIntyre	Councillor Len Scoullar
Councillor Robert Macintyre	
Councillor Neil Mackay	
Councillor Donald MacMillan	
Councillor Bruce Marshall	

**Also Present:**

Councillor Gordon Chalmers	Councillor James McQueen
Councillor Mary Jean Devon	Councillor John Semple
Councillor Danny Kelly	Councillor Isobel Strong
Councillor Alex McNaughton	Councillor Al Reay

**Attending:**

Sally Loudon, Chief Executive  
Douglas Hendry, Executive Director – Customer Services  
Cleland Sneddon, Executive Director – Community Services  
Sandy McTaggart, Executive Director – Development and Infrastructure Services  
Donald MacVicar, Head of Community and Culture  
Moira MacVicar, Community Support Development Manager  
Robert Pollock, Head of Economic Development

The Chair referred to the recent sudden sad loss of Councillor Donald MacIntosh.

The Chair ruled and the Executive agreed that the business dealt with at item 12 of this Minute be taken as a matter of urgency by reason of the possible significant impact on the local economy should the matter not be resolved quickly.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from David McEwan and Alison Palmer.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (IF ANY)**

Councillor Gary Mulvaney declared a non financial interest in item 4 of these Minutes (Strategic Housing Fund Applications) due to his membership of the Dunbritton Housing Association Management Committee.

Councillor Elaine Robertson declared an non financial interest in item 4 of these

Minutes (Strategic Housing Fund Applications) due to her membership of West Highland Housing Association.

### **3. ARGYLL AND BUTE LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY 2011-2016**

A report advising Members of the proposed arrangements for submission of the Local Housing Strategy for approval by Scottish Ministers was considered.

#### **Decision**

Approved the Strategy in principle for submission to Scottish Ministers on the understanding that it may be subject to variation following the conclusion of the Scottish Government's appraisal.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 26 October 2011, submitted)

Councillor Mulvaney having previously declared an interest in the following item of business left the room and took no part in the debate.

Councillor Elaine Robertson having previously declared an interest in the following item of business chose to remain in the room but took no part in the debate.

### **4. STRATEGIC HOUSING FUND APPLICATIONS**

The Executive, at its meeting on 12 August 2010, agreed that all applications for grants and loans from the Strategic Housing Fund would be submitted to the Executive in March and October annually. The Scottish Government announced a new approach to funding affordable housing in March 2011 and launched the Innovation and Investment Fund which meant that Council Policy would be required to be updated after Government Guidance was received in early 2012. A report explaining the implications on previous decisions made by the Council in terms of applications to the Strategic Housing Fund; updating Members on the outcomes of the bids to the Innovation and Investment Fund and resulting applications to the Strategic Housing Fund; and requesting Members to consider a loan request from Fyne Homes for development at the Old Court House, Castle Street, Rothesay was considered.

#### **Decision**

1. Approved disposal of the area of land being part of the former Hermitage Academy site to Dunbritton Housing Association for development of 51 affordable homes.
2. Approved allocations from the Strategic Housing Fund as follows -
  - a) £510,000 grant to Dunbritton Housing Association to support the development of 51 affordable homes at Hermitage Academy site Helensburgh.
  - b) £800,000 loan to Dunbritton Housing Association to support the infrastructure development at Hermitage Academy site.

- c) £500,000 grant to West Highland Housing Association, to support the development of 50 affordable homes at Dunbeg.
- d) £97,000 grant to Argyll Community Housing Association to support the development of 8 affordable homes at Dalmally.
- e) £1.9m loan to Fyne Homes for a period of up to three years to enable the Housing Association to continue to market the properties at Castle Street, Rothesay on a shared equity basis.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 11 October 2011, submitted)

Councillor Mulvaney re-joined the meeting.

## **5. AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND RURAL REGENERATION**

Members considered a report proposing the allocation of £750,000 from the Strategic Housing Fund to support the development of affordable housing to sustain and regenerate some of the most remote and fragile rural areas. The report proposed that those areas that demonstrate high housing need and those that had been identified as rural renaissance settlements within the Economic Development Action Plan and Local Development Plan be targeted along with an action area in the National Park Plan.

### **Decision**

1. Approved the creation of a £750,000 Rural Housing Development Fund, utilising resources within the Strategic Housing Fund, to stimulate rural regeneration and address housing need.
2. Noted that bids submitted to the Fund would be subject of a future report to the Executive for approval.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 20 October 2011, submitted)

## **6. REQUIREMENT TO ACHIEVE THE 2012 HOMELESSNESS TARGET - INCREASED PRIORITY NEED**

The Council had been set a target by the Scottish Government to increase the percentage of homeless households who are determined to be in priority need to 100% in order that all unintentionally homeless households will be entitled to settled accommodation. A report recommending that from 1 April 2012 that all unintentionally homeless people be determined to be a priority need and be entitled to settled accommodation was considered.

### **Decision**

Recommended to the Council agreement that from 1 April 2012 all unintentionally homeless people be determined a priority need and be entitled to settled accommodation; and that the Council's Homeless Policy is amended to take account of this change.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 24 October 2011, submitted)

## **7. PRESSURED AREA DESIGNATION**

Following the implementation of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010, the Scottish Government published statutory guidance for local authorities on the designation of pressurised areas. Members considered a report proposing the designation of a number of pressurised areas across the local authority area.

### **Decision**

1. Approved the designation of the specified settlements detailed at paragraph 3.10 of the report as pressurised areas in accordance with the statutory powers devolved to local authorities under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010.
2. Agreed that Pressurised Area Designations (PADs) should apply to all eligible property types in the designated areas and that the designation should cover a period of 10 years, commencing from January 2012.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Community Services dated 21 October 2011, submitted)

## **8. CHIEF SOCIAL WORK OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT 2010/2011**

The Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2010/11 was before the Executive for consideration. The report gave an overview of social work activity undertaken by the authority including the statutory governance and leadership functions of the role of the Chief Social Work Officer.

### **Decision**

Noted the report.

(Reference: Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report 2010/11, submitted)

## **9. IMPACT OF NATIONAL CHANGES TO BLUE BADGE ADMINISTRATION**

A report advising of significant changes, introduced by the Government, to the administration of applications for disabled parking 'Blue Badges' which would centralise the currently devolved process; was considered.

### **Decision**

The Executive –

1. Noted the imminent national implementation of the BBIS and mandated the Customer Management Project to implement it locally and to adjust the Customer Management Project Plan and priorities to meet the immutable 1 January 2012 go live date.

2. Agreed to sign up to the Access Agreement with Northgate Information Solutions as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.
3. Agreed that the fee for new Blue Badges (and replacements) awarded after 1 January 2012 should be the maximum permissible amount (currently proposed to be £20) to reflect the additional workload for the Council as set out in paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4 of the report, and that the additional charge be levied by Northgate for badge production.
4. Agreed that an information campaign is undertaken to inform customers of the BBIS changes.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Customer Services dated 26 August 2011, submitted)

## **10. CAR PARKING CHARGES**

A report which sought approval for the suspension of parking charges across all areas of Argyll and Bute, during the 5 day period up to and including Christmas Eve (20 – 24 December 2011 inclusive) was considered.

### **Decision**

Approved the suspension of car parking charges on off street car parks across all areas of Argyll and Bute during the 5 day period up to and including Christmas Eve 2011.

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Development and Infrastructure Services dated 9 November 2011, submitted)

## **11. TOURISM IN ARGYLL AND BUTE**

The spokesperson for Enterprise, Energy, Culture and Tourism had submitted a report for consideration by the Executive.

### **Decision**

Noted the report.

(Reference: Report by Spokesperson for Enterprise, Energy, Culture and Tourism dated November 2011, submitted)

## **12. CALEDONIAN MACBRAYNE FERRY SERVICES - SUMMER 2012 BOOKINGS/FARES**

A report advising Members of concerns raised regarding Caledonian MacBrayne ferry bookings for the summer 2012 season as a result of delays in the publication of Transport Scotland's farescales for Government funded ferry contracts was considered. The delay in the publication of these farescales

meant that there would be a possible significant impact on the local economy due to lost tourism/business revenue.

### **Decision**

Agreed that the Council write to the Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, Keith Brown MSP, to ask that this matter is investigated as a matter of the highest priority and action taken at the earliest possible date to address this matter and prevent any further economic damage to our Island Communities.

(Councillor Robert Macintyre having moved a motion that failed to find a seconder requested his dissent from the foregoing decision to be recorded)

(Reference: Report by Executive Director – Development and Infrastructure Services dated 23 November 2011, submitted)