



## **Pre-Housing and Communities Committee Forum –open to all tenants and TRA representatives**

**Note of zoom meeting on Monday 31st August 2020**

This note also includes the **outcome** of the Housing and Communities Committee (HACC) on the 2nd September 2020 which is noted in boxes after each item discussed.

### **Present:**

Cllr Diane Docherty (Housing Convenor)  
Frances McGonagle (Littleholm TRA)  
Georgia McCambley (Central Radnor Park TRA)  
John Kerr (Housing Development & Homelessness Manager)  
Jane Mack (Snr Development Officer-Tenant Participation)  
Stefan Kristmanns (Housing Development Co-ordinator)  
Edward Thomas (Housing Operations Manager)  
Peter Barry (Strategic Lead) – present for discussion on Item 12

**Apologies received from:** Billy Neeson (Westbridgend TRA), June Todd (WDTRO), Jacqui Peacock (Dalmuir MSF's TRA), Polly Wheelans (Littleholm TRA).

### **Items discussed in order of priority for tenants.**

#### **Item 12 .Housing Revenue Account Budgetary Control Report to 31 July 2020 (Period 4)**

#### **Key points from discussion**

Frances McGonagle raised the WDTRO's concern about the honesty and transparency of the HACC finance papers as there was more detail in the full Council paper on COVID about potential to charge HRA for lost income than in the HACC finance papers.

Peter Barry appreciated the concern raised and the issue had not been presented in an ideal way but in the Council paper, Finance officers are just giving advance reference of the thinking of how they could plug the anticipated gap. No decision being taken and was just an update paper.

Even as an update paper Frances thought that it should be flagged up in housing papers even if just for discussion. Peter noted this point and there was agreement that full discussion with tenants would be needed and this would happen before any decision papers were submitted for Council decision.

Question submitted by Billy Neeson asked by Jane Mack in his absence– Why should tenants pay Building Services for work that hasn't been done?

Peter advised that a motion agreed by COSLA gave Council's flexibility to charge HRA for some lost income due to COVID. Audit Scotland, an independent organisation, is happy with the arrangement but Peter emphasised that the full financial situation would need to be reviewed and many answers needed before in that position. Assurance given that would be full discussion with the WDTRG and Joint Rent Group before any decisions are made.

Frances asked about Appendix 1 on page 123 (table shows annual budget for Repairs & Maintenance) and figure for spending on Repairs & Maintenance shown as £3,762,000 as seemed high and wanted to know if that was only for work carried out during lockdown?

Peter confirmed that Repairs & Maintenance were still operating during lockdown and particularly emergency and void work was getting done. Martin Feeney not available for full response but Edward Thomas agreed to raise query and provide a fuller response. Edward also advised that there was a delay in the charging process and work from end of last financial year could be included in that figure.

**After meeting the following clarification and breakdown of spend was provided.**

	Total Budget 20/21	Spend to date	Forecast spend
	£000	£000	£000
Repairs & Maintenance	12,517	3,762	11,162

Has been confirmed by Finance and Building Services that the charges to the HRA in the 2020/21 Budgetary control report are for jobs which have taken place in 2020/21 i.e. 1 April – 31 July.

There has been no charges assumed in the budgetary control report for work that has not been undertaken.

Work which had taken place during 2019/20 was paid for in full in 2019/20 (jobs partially completed are valued at the year end and charges made for the proportion due).

In terms of the breakdown of the current year spend, details of the spend are below.

Further breakdown of the number of repairs in each category or a further breakdown of the jobbing repairs i.e. emergencies / routine etc. can be provided on request

	<b>YTD 2020/21</b>
	<b>£</b>
Jobbing Repairs (HMTA & Private Contractors)	2,142,780
Tenants Priority Budget	33,333
Tenants Sustainability	156,458
Travelling Persons	7,667
Void Repairs & Maintenance	393,974
Adaptations for Disabled	83,333
Garden Tidy Scheme	56,307
Other Maintenance - gas, lifts, CCTV etc.	532,162
Rapid Rehousing	56,417
High Rise Fire Safety	-
Other Repairs - grants, decants, alarms, pest control etc.	273,491
Open Space Maintenance	116,667
Recoveries - insurance & rechargeables	- 90,603
<b>REPAIRS &amp; MAINTENANCE</b>	<b>3,761,985</b>

**Item 12 .Housing Revenue Account Budgetary control report to 31 July 2020  
(Period 4)**

**Agreed**

**Item 8. Scottish Social Housing Charter Update Report**

**Key points from discussion**

Frances highlighted the reference to the Annual Assurance Statement (AAS) in the report as last years statement said that the Council was working towards full

compliance with HRA Guidance and so would want to know what had been done in last year to change that?

Stefan confirmed that the paper was advising that the AAS would be submitted and then retrospective approval at committee sought as the timing for the submission was before the Committee date and last year had submitted after committee but Regulator had publicly named WDC as submitting late. To avoid that, this year's plan will still involve discussion with the Housing Convener and the WDTR0 before the AAS gets submitted. Areas where we are not fully compliant need to be highlighted and be upfront. Assurance Statement signed by Housing Convener and Diane aware of that responsibility and will be need to be satisfied with the content before signing.

Question submitted by Billy Neeson asked by Jane Mack in his absence– concern that overall tenant satisfaction had reduced (page 39) and in particular tenant satisfaction with the repairs service had dropped (page 40).

Diane advised that this had been highlighted at pre-agenda and she shared his concern. It was confirmed that a paper will be submitted to committee in November outlining the improvements that Building Services were doing to improve the service. Stefan also advised that at the Housing Challenges meetings been looking at all areas of weakness within the Charter performance areas and actions developed to improve performance.

**Item 8. Scottish Social Housing Charter Update Report**

**Agreed**

**Item 6. New Approaches to Homelessness Update Report – ‘More than a Roof’ Final report and ‘Home at the Heart 2019-24’ Year 1 Update on Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.**

John advised been high levels of homelessness during lockdown and been successful in ensuring no rough sleeping or destitution in West Dunbartonshire. Instances of homelessness are steadily coming down but still a key priority. John proposed that he brought regular updates to the WDC/WDTR0 Liaison meetings.

No further discussion.

**Item 6. New Approaches to Homelessness Update Report – ‘More than a Roof’ Final report and ‘Home at the Heart 2019-24’ Year 1 Update on Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.**

**Agreed**

**Item 7. More Homes – West Dunbartonshire and ‘Building Back Better’ – West Dunbartonshire Council Affordable Housing Supply Programme**

Agreed Building Back Better not best name but no further discussion.

<b>Item 7. More Homes – West Dunbartonshire and ‘Building Back Better’ – West Dunbartonshire Council Affordable Housing Supply Programme</b> <b>Agreed</b>
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**Item 9. ‘Involving You’ West Dunbartonshire Council’s Tenant Participation Strategy 2017-20 Annual Progress Report.**

John advised that all social landlords have a statutory duty to have an active Tenant Participation Strategy and because lockdown has affected consultation opportunities, the paper includes a formal request to extend current Strategy into 2021 when a new strategy will go to committee in February 2021.

No further discussion.

<b>Item 9. ‘Involving You’ West Dunbartonshire Council’s Tenant Participation Strategy 2017-20 Annual Progress Report.</b> <b>Agreed</b>
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**Item 10. Rent Collection Policy**

No discussion

<b>Item 10. Rent Collection Policy</b> <b>Agreed</b>
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The next Housing & Community Committee (HACC) will be on 4th November so there will be a **Pre- HACC Forum on Monday 2<sup>th</sup> November 2020** (probably via zoom) to discuss the papers with the Housing Convenor and officers who have written the papers.

The papers are available the week before and electronic copies will be sent to all TRA Secretaries, WDTR0 members and via TP Facebook page.

Paper copies will also be made available as are usually a lengthy document to read on a small screen.

**This Forum is open to any tenant or member of a Tenant & Resident Association**

