

# Notice of meeting and agenda

## Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

**10.00am, Tuesday, 14 May 2013**

Dean of Guild Court Room, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh

This is a public meeting and members of the public are welcome to attend

### Contact

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## **1. Order of business**

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- 1.1 Including any notices of motion and any other items of business submitted as urgent for consideration at the meeting.

## **2. Declaration of interests**

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- 2.1 Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest.

## **3. Deputations**

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- 3.1 If any

## **4. Minutes**

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- 4.1 Minute of the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee of 16 April 2013 (circulated) – submitted for approval as a correct record.

## **5. Key Decisions forward plan**

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- 5.1 Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Key Decisions Forward Plan May to July 2013 (circulated)

## **6. Business Bulletin**

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- 6.1 Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Business Bulletin 14 May 2013 (circulated)

## **7. Executive decisions**

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- 7.1 2012 Employee Survey Update – report by the Director of Corporate Governance (circulated)
- 7.2 Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) Policy – report by the Director of Corporate Governance (circulated)

## **8. Routine decisions**

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If any

## 9. Motions

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If any

### **Carol Campbell**

Head of Legal, Risk and Compliance

## Committee Members

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Councillors Burns (Convener), Cardownie (Vice-Convener), Burgess, Chapman, Child, Nick Cook, Edie, Godzik, Ricky Henderson, Hinds, Lewis, Mowat, Rankin, Rose and Ross.

## Information about the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

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The Corporate Policy and Strategy consists of 15 Councillors and is appointed by the City of Edinburgh Council. The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee usually meets every four weeks.

The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee usually meets in the Dean of Guild Court Room in the City Chambers on the High Street in Edinburgh. There is a seated public gallery and the meeting is open to all members of the public.

## Further information

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If you have any questions about the agenda or meeting arrangements, please contact Louise Williamson, Committee Services, City of Edinburgh Council, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh EH1 1YJ, Tel 0131 529 4830, e-mail [louise.p.williamson@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:louise.p.williamson@edinburgh.gov.uk) .

A copy of the agenda and papers for this meeting will be available for inspection prior to the meeting at the main reception office, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh.

The agenda, minutes and public reports for this meeting and all the main Council committees can be viewed online by going to [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cpol](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/cpol).

## Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00 am, Tuesday, 16 April 2013

### Present

Councillors Burns (Convener), Cardownie (Vice-Convener), Burgess, Chapman, Child, Nick Cook, Godzik, Ricky Henderson, Hinds, Lewis, Mowat, Rankin, Rose and Ross.

### 1. Welfare Reform - Managing Arrears Arising from Housing Benefit Under-occupancy Restrictions

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#### (a) Deputations

##### (i) Edinburgh Tenants Federation

The deputation expressed concern at the impact of welfare reform and in particular the under-occupancy restrictions. They felt that this would have an adverse effect on social housing within Edinburgh and the delivery of the capital improvement scheme. They indicated that there was the prospect of increased homelessness with the added pressure of increasing fuel costs and rents, and benefits being capped. The deputation raised concerns that there were not enough one bedroom properties within Edinburgh to accommodate those who would need them.

The deputation asked the Council to consider taking legal steps to challenge the bedroom tax reforms.

##### (ii) Unite

The deputation welcomed the motion by the Capital coalition. They felt that rent arrears would rise as the year progressed and that there was no calculation of the effects on social landlords in Edinburgh. They welcomed the proposal for a Joint Working Group and the Council's support to local campaigns to scrap the bedroom tax.

(b) Report by the Director of Services for Communities and Motions by Councillors Ricky Henderson and Burgess

Details were provided on the implications for tenants, the Housing Revenue Account and the housing service following the introduction of the Housing Benefit under-occupancy reforms.

The following motions had been submitted in terms of Standing Order 16.1:

(i) By Councillor Ricky Henderson

- “1) Committee wishes to express its concern regarding the impact that the range of Welfare Reform measures is having on people in Edinburgh.
- 2) Specifically the Committee is concerned that, from April 2013, measures to reduce housing benefit for tenants of local authorities and housing associations (Bedroom Tax) have not taken account of the acute shortage of one bedroom homes. This will lead to significant hardship for the tenants affected and increase the risk of homelessness.
- 3) Committee is further concerned that these measures may have an adverse impact on council and housing association landlords’ rental income and their ability to invest in improving their own stock and in building new, affordable to heat, homes.
- 4) Committee notes that there is a significant risk of a reduction of £45 million in capital investment, funded from the Housing Revenue Account, as a result of this and other measures.
- 5) Committee agrees:
  - (a) that where the Director of Services for Communities is satisfied that tenants who are subject to the under-occupancy charge have done all they reasonably could to avoid falling into arrears, then all legitimate means to collect rent arrears should be utilised except eviction.
  - (b) to establish a joint working group that will include elected members, officials from Housing and Revenues and Benefits, Registered Social Landlords and tenants representatives. The role of the working group shall be to monitor the implementation and impact of various benefits changes and to contribute to consideration of further measures to support tenants.

(c) to support calls by local campaigns to scrap the Bedroom Tax.”

(ii) By Councillor Burgess:

"This Committee:

- 1) Expresses concern that on 1 April 2013 new restrictions were introduced by the UK Government affecting working-age households occupying social housing such that reductions will be applied to housing benefit payments where tenants are deemed to be under-occupying their homes. This has been called the 'bedroom tax';
- 2) Is further concerned that the bedroom tax is now affecting around 4,000 council tenants and a similar number of housing association tenants in Edinburgh;
- 3) Notes that a range of actions to mitigate the under-occupancy restrictions have been looked at, including providing offers of reasonable alternative accommodation, but that the supply and turnover of smaller accommodation comes nowhere close to meeting the demand and that tenants unable to move to smaller accommodation may fall into rent arrears because of the bedroom tax;
- 4) Is concerned that in 2011-12 there were 93 council tenants losing their homes following eviction action for rent arrears and understands that continuation of the same approach for bedroom tax arrears could make many more people homeless;
- 5) Recognises that the Housing Revenue Account may be affected because of non-payment of the under-occupancy element (bedroom tax), but believes that pro-active support and engagement with tenants, tailored to their circumstances is more effective than the threat of eviction;
- 6) Further recognises that making tenants homeless may not impact directly on the HRA but will increase pressure on homelessness services, increase cost of providing temporary accommodation and longer-term impact on health and social-care services;
- 7) Therefore agrees to take measures to reduce the impact of bedroom tax on council tenants including:
  - (i) redesignating bedrooms, possibly as public rooms, to mitigate under-occupancy restrictions and,
  - (ii) in determining when and whether to initiate and pursue proceedings to recover a tenancy as a consequence of rent

arrears, the council will not evict a tenant for rent arrears due to the under-occupancy element (bedroom tax).

- 8) Agrees that the Council will use its influence to encourage Registered Social Landlords to adopt a policy of not evicting tenants for bedroom tax arrears.”

Councillor Burgess withdrew his motion.

### **Motion**

To approve the terms of the motion submitted by Councillor Ricky Henderson under Standing Order 16.1, and additionally:-

- 1) To note that around 3,300 Council tenants would be affected by the reform.
- 2) To note that the rental income funded housing management services, improvements to existing homes and building new affordable homes.
- 3) To note the approaches adopted by other local authorities and that of the Govan Law Centre.
- 4) To note that the Council’s current practice for managing rent arrears was in line with policies now being adopted by Dundee, Clackmannanshire and West Dunbartonshire Councils which supported a no evictions approach.
- 5) To note the additional measures that could be introduced to support tenants who were affected by the under-occupation charge and the assessment of the risks associated with disregarding arrears due to under-occupation.
- 6) To refer the report to the Health, Wellbeing and Housing Policy Development and Review Sub-Committee on 23 April 2013 for discussion.
- 7) To call for a further report on decisions made by other councils in England and Scotland to re-designate bedrooms, providing information on the rationale and impact of these decisions.
- 8) That the Council use its influence to encourage Edinburgh’s Registered Social Landlords to adopt a policy of not evicting tenants for bedroom tax arrears.
- 9) To continue to work constructively with the Scottish Government and to seek a meeting with the relevant minister to discuss issues affecting Edinburgh as a result of the welfare reform changes.

- 10) to call for a report on the implications of the Govan Law Centre's guide on "Challenging your bedroom tax decision".

- moved by Councillor Ricky Henderson, seconded by Councillor Cardownie.

### **Amendment**

- 1) To note that Housing Benefit payments had doubled in the 10 years to 2010.
- 2) To note the need to reduce the increase in total Welfare payments, especially whilst the UK continued to have a large borrowing requirement.
- 3) To note that the Housing Benefit measures were not designed to make people move but, for people who were under occupying, to encourage realistic choices about how they would meet the rent on a property which was larger than they needed, such as moving into work or increasing working hours.
- 4) To note the introduction of measures to reduce the subsidy currently paid to occupants of social housing who under occupied their accommodation.
- 5) To note that in this respect these measures put recipients of Housing Benefit in social rented housing on the same footing as those in private rented housing, where such a standard was already imposed.
- 6) To note that in February 2013, of the 25,385 outstanding applications for housing on EdIndex, almost 5,000 applicants classed themselves as overcrowded.
- 7) To note that in recent years around 500 one bedroom Council properties had become available for let each year.
- 8) To note the estimate of 3,800 Council tenants who would be affected by the new rules.
- 9) To note that the UK Government, the Scottish Government and Edinburgh Council had provided considerable sums to support people who found themselves in severe difficulty in relation to the reduction in Housing Benefit.
- 10) To note the financial, administrative and other risks outlined in the Managing Arrears Arising from Housing Benefit Under-occupancy report (paragraphs 2.32 to 2.36) concerning the consequences of mixed messages regarding tenants responsibilities, greater risk of tenants getting into longer term debt and its consequences, fairness, legal challenge and reduction in HRA which would reduce resources and the potential for higher rents for all.



- 11) To note current council measures (paragraphs 2.19 to 2.30) which detailed support for tenants who had fallen into arrears for any reason and the limited circumstances in which action was taken for eviction.
- 12) To agree not to adopt a 'no evictions' policy in respect of arrears deemed to accrue in connection with the Housing Benefit reforms.

- moved by Councillor Rose, seconded by Councillor Mowat

### **Voting**

The voting was as follows:

For the motion (as adjusted)	-	11 votes
For the amendment	-	3 votes

### **Decision**

To approve the motion by Councillor Ricky Henderson.

(References – Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee 26 February 2013 (item 12); report by the Director of Services for Communities, submitted.)

### **Declaration of Interests**

Councillor Cardownie declared a non-financial interest in the above item as a member of Unite.

## **2. Minute**

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### **Decision**

To approve the minute of the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee of 26 February 2013 as a correct record.

## **3. Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Key Decisions Forward Plan April to June 2013**

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The Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Key Decisions Forward Plan for April to June 2013 was presented.

### **Decision**

To note the Key Decisions Forward Plan for April to June 2013.

(Reference – report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted)

## 4. Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee Business Bulletin 16 April 2013

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The Corporate Policy and Strategy Business Bulletin for 16 April 2013 was presented.

### Decision

To note the Business Bulletin.

(Reference – report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

## 5. Welfare Reform

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### (a) Further Update

The Committee had agreed a number of recommendations as part of the Council's actions to mitigate the impact of Welfare Reform.

An update was provided on the progress being made by the Council and partners to develop arrangements to mitigate, where possible, the negative impact of the UK Government's welfare reforms.

### Decision

- 1) To note the continuing progress on assessing the impact of welfare reforms and actions for developing partial mitigation strategies.
- 2) To agree additional grant funding for income maximisation, welfare benefits advice and advocacy services, for Citizen's Advice Edinburgh (£100,000), Capability Ability Network (£22,000), The Action Group (£15,000), FAIR (£15,000) and COSS (£7,000).
- 3) To note that additional advice funding totalling £67,000 had already been agreed for the Welfare Rights and Health Project, CHAI Advice Service and Granton Information Project.
- 4) To agree the additional expenditure on the Council's Advice services proposed in the report by the Director of Corporate Governance.
- 5) To note that the Director of Services for Communities would report to the Health, Wellbeing and Housing Committee in June 2013 on the Advice Services review.
- 6) To approve the recommendation not to volunteer to participate in the proposed Pathfinder Project for Pension Credit (given Edinburgh's involvement in the DWP's Direct Payment Demonstration Project).

- 7) To note the next progress update report would be on 11 June 2013 (with a separate briefing to Committee members in early May).

(References – Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee 4 December 2012 (item 4); report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

#### **(b) Council Tax Reduction Scheme Arrangements**

An update was provided on a new service being provided by the Council, the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, which had replaced Council Tax Benefit on 1 April 2013 as part of the UK Government's programme of Welfare Reform.

##### **Decision**

- 1) To note the current arrangements for the implementation of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in 2013/14.
- 2) To approve a programme of consultation on the future alternative schemes which would take place in 2013/14 and note that the Committee would be advised of the key outcomes.
- 3) To note that expenditure against the funding gap provision would be monitored by the Finance and Budget Committee.

(References – Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee 22 January 2013 (item 7); report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

#### **c) Scottish Welfare Fund Arrangements**

An update was provided on the introduction of a new Council Service, the Scottish Welfare Fund, which came into operation on 1 April 2013 and transferred responsibility of managing the services from the DWP to local authorities.

##### **Decision**

- 1) To note the introduction of the Scottish Welfare Fund from 1 April 2013.
- 2) To note that this was an interim arrangements for two years. Provision of this service would be subject to review for 2015/16 and beyond.

(References – Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee 22 January 2013 (item 7) report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

## **6. Connected Capital Programme Status Update**

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The Council had approved the use of £1.9m to support the Council's proposed programme in response to Edinburgh's "Connected Capital" Programme bid to the

Urban Broadband Fund as part of the UK Government's Super-Connected Cities Initiative.

An update was provided on Edinburgh's "Connected Capital" Programme bid to the Urban Broadband Fund.

### **Decision**

- 1) To note the current status of the Connected Capital Programme and that the approach was in line with other successful Urban Broadband Fund (UBF) cities across the UK.
- 2) To note the preliminary findings from the pre-procurement phase of the Wireless Project and the Evaluation Criteria.
- 3) To note the active dialogue with BDUK to establish the best mechanism to progress the Fixed Broadband Capital Infill Procurement.

(References – Act of Council No 6 of 26 April 2012; Policy and Strategy Committee 2 October 2012 (item 6); report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

## **7. Sustainable Edinburgh 2020 Annual Report and Scottish Climate Change Declaration Annual Report**

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The Council had approved the "Sustainable Edinburgh 2020" policy framework which set out the aims, objectives and targets for the sustainable development of the Council and the city to 2020.

The Sustainable Edinburgh 2020 Annual report and the Scottish Climate Change Declaration Annual report were presented and progress made against key carbon, climate and sustainability targets and legal duties outlined.

### **Decision**

- 1) To note the good progress made across the Council in terms of meeting Sustainable Edinburgh 2020 and Scotland's Climate Change Declaration objectives.
- 2) To approve the Recommendations within the Sustainable Edinburgh 2020 Annual Report and the draft 2012 Scottish Climate Change Declaration Annual Report for submission to COSLA.
- 3) To note the recently established Green Investment Projects Group (GIPG) and the re-establishment of an Edinburgh Sustainable Development Strategic Partnership and agree to consider resources for the work of the GIPG and Partnership during the annual budget planning process.
- 4) To approve the establishment of the proposed Senior Member and Chief Officer Working Group.

- 5) To ask for a further report to the Finance and Budget Committee on the financial implications of the scheme.
- 6) To ask the officials to develop the RAG approach to include individual actions within Sustainable Edinburgh 2020 reports.

(Reference – report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

## **8. Corporate Governance Senior Management Structure – Revised Arrangements**

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A new management structure for the Corporate Governance service had been approved in February 2012.

Details were provided of a review of the structure following the resignation of the Head of Policy and Public Affairs and the revised arrangements which had been put in place.

### **Decision**

- 1) To approve the changes made to the Corporate Governance Senior Management structure.
- 2) To note the intention to review those arrangements in 6 months.

(References – Policy and Strategy Committee 28 February 2012 (item 10); report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

## **9. Towards an Edinburgh Autism Strategy – A Plan for People with Autism who do not have a Learning Disability**

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Details were provided on the draft plan for the development of a local autism strategy which had been developed in partnership with people with autism, their carers, NHS Lothian and local service providers. The draft plan outlined a range of proposals including the need to raise awareness across services, improving the care pathway for people with autism, improving housing services, increasing access to employment and support for carers.

### **Decision**

To note that the Council and NHS Lothian would be consulting on a plan for autism services in Edinburgh from May to July 2013.

(Reference – joint report by the Directors of Health and Social Care and Children and Families, submitted.)

## **10. Integration of Adult Health and Social Care Consultation: Scottish Government Response**

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The joint response of the City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian to the Scottish Government's consultation on the integration of adult health and social care services had been approved in September 2012.

Details were provided of the Scottish Government's response to key points made by respondents following the consultation. The Scottish Government's intentions for its forthcoming legislation and the approach for the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership were outlined.

### **Decision**

- 1) To note the Scottish Government response and intention to legislate.
- 2) To note the alignment of plans for the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership with the legislative intent.
- 3) To note that a further report would be made to the Committee in May.

(References – Policy and Strategy Committee 4 September 2012 (item 10); report by the Director of Health and Social Care, submitted.)

## **11. Redesigning the Community Justice System: Response to the Scottish Government's Consultation**

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The proposed Council response to the Scottish Government's consultation on redesigning the Community Justice System was presented.

### **Decision**

- 1) To approve the draft response to the Government's consultation on redesigning the Community Justice System, which supported the retention of criminal justice social work services within the remit of the Council.
- 2) To agree to receive a report to a future meeting on proposed arrangements to implement the suggested improvements to reduce re-offending, as set out in paragraphs 2.2.1 to 2.2.4 in the report by the Chief Social Work Officer.

(Reference – report by the Chief Social Work Officer, submitted.)

## **12. Funding Models for Tourism Promotion**

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The Committee had agreed to further consultation with relevant stakeholders on the viability of the introduction of a Transient Visitor Levy, with a view to developing a preferred model by early 2013.

An update was provided on discussions which had taken place within the Strategy Implementation Group which was a subgroup of the Edinburgh Tourism Action Group regarding funding models for tourism promotion.

### **Decision**

To note that the Strategy Implementation Group had formed a sub-group to agree the next steps, including the form of any future consultations.

(References – Policy and Strategy Committee 2 October 2012 (item 8); report by the Head of Economic Development, submitted.)

### **13. George Street: Festival Traffic Management – referral from the Transport and Environment Committee**

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The Transport and Environment Committee had referred a report on a proposed Temporary Traffic Regulation Order to close George Street to traffic between Hanover Street and Frederick Street during August 2013.

### **Decision**

To note the report by the Director of Services for Communities.

(Reference – report by the Head of Legal, Risk and Compliance, submitted.)

### **14. Conference Invitation – International Conference on the History of Freemasonry**

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### **Decision**

To approve the attendance of the Lord Provost at the International Conference on the History of Freemasonry on 24-26 May 2013.

(Reference – report by the Director of Corporate Governance, submitted.)

### **15. Motion by Councillor Rose – Waste Collections**

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The following motion by Councillor Rose was submitted in terms of Standing Order 16.1:

“Committee:

- 1) Notes that from 4 February 2013 waste collections a policy, of not collecting waste contained in bins which are overflowing or where the waste is beside the bins, has been publicised and implemented in a phased manner
- 2) Notes that there have been many occasions, before and after 4 February, where the Services for Communities Department of City of Edinburgh has failed to uplift

public waste as advertised, leaving waste on the street with the attendant inconvenience and risks to residents

- 3) Notes there is a discrepancy between the standards being applied by the Council's performance of its waste collection duties and the standards it is applying to residents
- 4) Resolves to instruct suspension of the implementation of the policy noted in paragraph 1 for at least four weeks from the date of this motion and until such time as performance of collection has improved and the manner of the implementation of the policy has been reviewed by the Director of Services for Communities."

### **Decision**

- 1) To note that Councillor Rose had agreed to withdraw his motion.
- 2) To ask Councillor Hinds to circulate a briefing paper to members on the statistics for top-hatting and complaints received.
- 3) To note that a report on waste collection would be submitted to the next meeting of the Transport and Environment Committee.

## **16. Motion by Councillor Mowat – Concessionary Fares**

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The following motion by Councillor Mowat was submitted in terms of Standing Order 16.1:

"Given confusion over who will pay for concessionary fares for trams, and comments from the Convener of SESTRan Bus Operator's group at a SESTRan meeting on 22 February 2013 that they will be locally funded, comments which were uncontradicted by the Transport Scotland representative at that meeting, Committee instructs that a report be prepared in one cycle detailing the discussions with all interested parties and progress on negotiating who will pay for concessionary fares."

### **Decision**

- 1) To note that Councillor Mowat had agreed to withdraw her motion.
- 2) To note that an update report was to be provided to the next meeting of the Tram All Party Oversight Group on this issue.



## Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

May 2013 to July 2013

Item	Key decisions	Expected date of decision	Wards affected	Director and lead officer	Coalition pledges and Council outcomes
1.	People Plan	14 May 2013	All	Director: Alastair Maclean Lead officer: Philip Barr, Head of Organisational Development <a href="mailto:Philip.barr@edinburgh.gov.uk">Philip.barr@edinburgh.gov.uk</a>	CO24-26
2.	Discretionary Housing Payments	14 May 2013	All	Director: Alastair Maclean Lead officer: Danny Gallacher, Head of Corporate and Transactional Services <a href="mailto:Danny.gallacher@edinburgh.gov.uk">Danny.gallacher@edinburgh.gov.uk</a>	CO24-26
3.	Health and Safety	11 June 2013	All	Director: Alastair Maclean Lead officer: Philip Barr, Head of Organisational Development <a href="mailto:Philip.barr@edinburgh.gov.uk">Philip.barr@edinburgh.gov.uk</a>	CO24-26
4.	Information Compliance	11 June 2013	All	Director: Alastair Maclean Lead officer: Kirsty-Louise Campbell, Governance Manager	CO24-26



Item	Key decisions	Expected date of decision	Wards affected	Director and lead officer	Coalition pledges and Council outcomes
				<a href="mailto:Kirstylouise.campbell@edinburgh.gov.uk">Kirstylouise.campbell@edinburgh.gov.uk</a>	
5.	Welfare Reform Update	11 June 2013	All	Director: Alastair Maclean Lead officer: Danny Gallacher, Head of Corporate and Transactional Services <a href="mailto:Danny.gallacher@edinburgh.gov.uk">Danny.gallacher@edinburgh.gov.uk</a>	CO24-26
6.	The Future Management and Ownership of Easter Craiglockhart Hill Nature Reserve	11 June 2013	Ward 9	Director: Mark Turley Lead officer: David Jamieson 0131 529 7055 <a href="mailto:David.jamieson@edinburgh.gov.uk">David.jamieson@edinburgh.gov.uk</a>	
7.	Health and Social Care Integration	11 June 2013	All	Director: Peter Gabbitas Lead officer: Susanne Harrison 0131 469 3982 <a href="mailto:Susanne.harrison@edinburgh.gov.uk">Susanne.harrison@edinburgh.gov.uk</a>	

**Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee**

**10am, Tuesday, 14 May 2013**

Dean of Guild Courtroom, City Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh

# Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

Convener:	Members:	Contact:
<p>Councillor Andrew Burns</p>  <p>Vice Convener:</p> <p>Councillor Steve Cardownie</p> 	<p>Councillors: Burns (Convener), Cardownie (Deputy Convener), Burgess, Chapman, Child, Nick Cook, Edie, Godzik, Ricky Henderson, Hinds, Lewis, Mowat, Rankin, Rose, Ross</p>	<p><a href="#">Kirsty-Louise Campbell</a>            Governance Manager            Tel: 0131 529 3654</p>

Recent news	Background
<p><b>By-election:</b></p> <p><b>Electoral Ward No. 16 Liberton/Gilmerton</b></p> <p>Following the death of Councillor Buchanan on Wednesday 3 April 2013, a by-election will take place for Electoral Ward No.16 Liberton/Gilmerton. It is the responsibility of the Returning Officer to run the by-election, which must be called within 3 months of the vacancy occurring. Arrangements are being made for it to take place on <b>Thursday 20 June 2013</b>, allowing the successful candidate to attend the Council meeting on 27 June.</p> <p>A Notice of Election will be published on Tuesday 30 April 2013; nominations can be lodged from that point on and</p>	<p><a href="#">Chris Highcock, Depute Returning Officer</a></p>

will close on Friday 17 May. This ward is one of the largest in the city with, as of 1 March, **24,127** electors of whom **5,052** are registered for a postal vote. Voting will take place in 9 Polling Places. Most of these are regular venues but due to local accommodation issues and availability a small number of voters will be using a different polling place from previous polls. Any changes have been discussed with local members and a programme of communications is in place to ensure that electors are aware of the change. The ballot papers will be counted on the day following the poll, Friday 21 June, in a manual count in the Council Chamber. Experienced council staff will be used who are familiar with the complexities of the STV system. A two phase communications plan is also in place, with an initial focus on registration which, once the deadline for that passes, then switches to encouraging turnout. This will involve traditional leaflets, posters and print adverts but also utilise a range of new and social media to maximise participation.

With a demanding programme of electoral events in the City over the coming year this by-election is being used by the Governance Service to test a re-engineered set of processes, improve our focus on the interests of the voter, train additional staff in the complexities of the polling and count processes and develop enhanced resilience in Elections Team.

### **Capital Coalition Pledges – Performance Report**

After the local government election in May 2012, the Capital Coalition set out its commitment to build a cooperative, more prosperous, Edinburgh in which every resident and community benefits. In August 2012, the Council agreed the Capital Coalition Pledges, noting arrangements for delivery and reporting on the 53 pledges every six months.

The next performance report will be reported to Full Council on 30 May 2013.

[Sarah Mackenzie, Business Intelligence Manager](#)

### **Edinburgh Food for Life Partnership**

On 14 March, the Council approved a motion calling for a report into the standards and transparency of the Council's food supply chains and exploring "what measures could be taken to accelerate and expand the current Food for Life (FFL) pilot which is seeking to increase the use of fresh, local and organic food in partnership with NHS Lothian and the University of Edinburgh." A report is being

[Nick Croft, Corporate Policy and Strategy Manager](#)

drafted by Services for Communities for full Council on 30th May.

Clovenstone Care Home will be the first of the Council's 3 pilot sites to be audited for the FFL bronze catering mark standard.

### **Edinburgh Community Energy Co-operatives**

The Corporate Policy and Strategy Team (CPST) is remitted to support the development of community energy co-operatives in Edinburgh and in doing so will promote and encourage community renewable.

The Community Energy Co-operative (EC)<sup>2</sup> and Changeworks, under their existing energy project remit with the Council, convened a first meeting of the 'Edinburgh Community Energy Project Group' on 23 April. The meeting discussed the potential role and remit of the Group as a sub-group of the new Edinburgh Sustainable Development Strategic Partnership, and the opportunities for the development and expansion of community energy projects across the city.

A report on the outputs from this meeting will be given at the next meeting of the Edinburgh Sustainable Development Strategic Partnership, currently scheduled for 7 May 2013.

[Nick Croft, Corporate Policy and Strategy Manager](#)

### **Forthcoming activities:**

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# Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 14 May 2013

## 2012 Employee Survey Update

Item number	7.1
Report number	
Wards	Not Applicable

### Links

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Coalition pledges	
Council outcomes	<a href="#">CO24; CO25; CO26; CO27</a>
Single Outcome Agreement	

### Alastair Maclean

Director of Corporate Governance

Contact: Steven Wright, Development Partner

E-mail: [steven.wright@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:steven.wright@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 469 3177

# Executive summary

## 2012 Employee Survey Update

### Summary

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In October 2012 the findings of the Council's 2012 Employee Survey were reported to the former Policy and Strategy Committee.

On 26 February 2013 the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee requested an update on the analysis and actions undertaken since October 2012 to address the development areas identified through the survey findings.

A number of related actions are set out, including the development of a new Organisational Development strategy and the delivery of Council wide manager engagement events. These actions are underpinned by the development of service area 'People Plans' which take account of feedback from the 2012 Employee Survey and previous Investors in People and Healthy Working Lives assessments.

### Recommendations

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It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee:

- (a) note the actions taken to date in responding to the findings of the 2012 Employee Survey; and
- (b) agree to receive a further update on progress in September 2013, to include an update on the outcome of the Investors in People and Healthy Working Lives assessments currently taking place.

### Measures of success

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The success of each activity will be measured through:

- service specific focus groups, surveys and opportunities to feedback directly to senior managers;
- starting in June 2013, quarterly Council wide 'quick surveys' led by Organisational Development;
- positive feedback from the 2013 IiP assessment leading to the retention of IiP Gold standard in 2014;
- retention of Healthy Working Lives Silver status; and
- improvements in staff satisfaction and related measures in future employee surveys.

### Financial impact

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There are no financial implications arising from this report.



## **Equalities impact**

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There are no significant equalities implications arising from this report.

## **Sustainability impact**

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There are no adverse environmental impacts arising from this report.

## **Consultation and engagement**

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Consultation on the 'People Plans' has taken place with the trade unions. There has also been engagement with staff at a service level on how the issues raised through the employee survey can be addressed.

## **Background reading / external references**

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[Item 5: Employee Survey 2012 Headline Results and Next Steps, Policy and Strategy Committee, 2 October 2012](#)

## 2012 Employee Survey Update

### 1. Background

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- 1.1 The key findings of the Council's 2012 Employee Survey, the fifth employee survey of its kind undertaken by the Council, were reported to the former Policy and Strategy Committee at its meeting on 2 October 2012.
- 1.2 All Council employees were invited to participate in the survey, which was carried out between April and June 2012. The response rate was 36% (6,710 out of 18,703).
- 1.3 The survey findings identified both areas of strength and development:
  - views on line management, working environment and conditions, fair treatment and inclusion were generally positive;
  - confidence in decisions made by senior management appeared to have a strong influence on how people felt about working for the Council and on personal morale;
  - the need for increased visibility of senior management, communications and engagement, particularly on change and the strategic direction within each service area; and
  - there was also a negative view on employees' ability to influence decisions, underlining the importance of staff involvement in, and awareness of, the actions taken in response to the survey.
- 1.4 At the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee meeting on 26 February 2013 it was agreed that an update be provided on the related analysis and actions undertaken since October 2012 and how these were being implemented and monitored.

### 2. Main report

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#### Approach

- 2.1 Since the survey findings were published the Corporate Management Team has agreed three key themes for development across the Council:
  - Leadership;
  - Change Management, and
  - Line Management

- 2.2 Additional detailed analysis of the survey results has been undertaken at divisional level and senior management teams within each service area have agreed their own service specific priorities.
- 2.3 Each service area has produced their own 'People Plan' taking account of the feedback from the 2012 Employee Survey and previous Investors in People and Healthy Working Lives assessments.
- 2.4 Consultation on the 'People Plans' has taken place with the trade unions at branch and service level. These plans are now available on the Council's Orb intranet site.

### **Actions undertaken since October 2012**

- 2.5 A range of related actions have been undertaken at corporate and service level since the survey findings were reported in October 2012.

The main actions include:

#### **Council-wide**

- a new Organisational Development strategy has been developed and approved by the Corporate Management Team. The strategy will ensure a systematic approach to improving organisational effectiveness, aligning strategy, infrastructure and people through five key work streams. An overview of the strategy vision and the supporting work streams is provided in appendix 1;
- approximately 1,500 managers attended 'Pride in our People' events at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre in April. These events, led by the Council Leader, Chief Executive and the Corporate Management Team, set out the Council's achievements and future challenges and involved managers in how best to deliver the service transformation required to meet these challenges;
- an additional 30 people working on key change activity within the Council have been trained in Prosci, the Council's preferred Change Management methodology, and
- the Council's Leadership Matters programme, which is open to all line managers and is externally accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management and Edinburgh Napier University, has been reviewed and refreshed.

#### **Children and Families**

- a series of staff talkabout sessions have been delivered. The purpose of these sessions was to gather feedback from staff on a number of key themes identified within the 'People Plan' for the service;
- engagement with leaders and managers has improved through regular meetings, and

- the Children and Families Leadership and Management Framework has been reviewed and revised.

### **Economic Development**

- all staff were invited to attend workshops on the 2012 survey results. These workshops allowed staff the opportunity to contribute ideas to the Economic Development 'People Plan';
- communication activities were reviewed and a new communications strategy has been developed, and
- a staff development group has been established to discuss the learning and development needs within the service.

### **Corporate Governance**

- vision sessions were hosted by the Director for all staff within Corporate Governance;
- divisional follow-up events were arranged to allow staff the opportunity to contribute ideas on how to improve their service area;
- communication improvements have been implemented within Corporate Governance. Examples include open door sessions with the Director and Heads of Service and regular electronic communications on the issues affecting staff within Corporate Governance, and
- three local commitments have been made from the Director and each Head of Service based on concept of 'You said - we did'. These commitments are being progressed within service areas.

### **Health and Social Care**

- a monthly survey has been issued since February 2013 to capture staff feedback on specific areas of the employee survey. The results of these monthly surveys are analysed at team level to help site managers develop their team plans;
- a collaborative enquiry group has been formed to involve staff in change and seek their views on how Health and Social Care take forward the transformation agenda;
- three engagement events have taken place with future events planned every eight weeks, and
- improved uptake of Performance Review and Development (PRD). The aim is for all care workers (circa 400) working in Homes for Older People to have received a PRD by the end of June 2013.

### **Services for Communities**

- the TAM (Team Action Management) employee engagement model has been implemented within Corporate Property. This has allowed all staff the

opportunity to make a difference, influence change and to “*Have Their Say*” in making the right changes;

- the *imProve it* programme has delivered a number of sponsorship and supporting communications programmes. This has ensured that the ‘people’ aspects of change are properly addressed to support achievement of *imProve it* programme objectives;
- a new development programme for managers is in the early stages of development. The programme is being designed in conjunction with Organisational Development and appropriate elements of the programme will be shared with other service areas;
- a new staff engagement model has been implemented to support the implementation of service reviews. This new engagement method has been evaluated with very positive feedback from staff and trade unions, and
- consultation with senior managers and their teams has taken place to identify the top three actions in response to the survey feedback. These actions have been progressed as a priority within their service area.

### **Monitoring**

2.6 The success of each activity will be measured through:

- service specific focus groups, surveys and opportunities to feedback directly to senior managers;
- starting in June 2013, quarterly Council wide ‘quick surveys’ led by Organisational Development;
- positive feedback from the 2013 liP assessment leading to the retention of liP Gold standard in 2014;
- retention of Healthy Working Lives Silver status; and
- improvements in staff satisfaction and related measures in future employee surveys.

## **3. Recommendations**

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3.1 It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee:

- 3.1.1 note the actions taken to date in responding to the findings of the 2012 Employee Survey; and
- 3.1.2 agree to receive a further update on progress in September 2013, to include an update on the outcome of the Investors in People and Healthy Working Lives assessments currently taking place.

### **Alastair Maclean**

Director of Corporate Governance

## Links

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### **Coalition pledges**

#### **Council outcomes**

CO24 - The Council communicates effectively internally and externally and has an excellent reputation for customer care

CO25 - The Council has efficient and effective services that deliver on objectives

CO26 - The Council engages with stakeholders and works in partnership to improve services and deliver on agreed objectives

CO27 - The Council supports, invests in and develops our people

#### **Single Outcome Agreement**

#### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – OD vision and strategy

## Appendix 1: OD vision and strategy

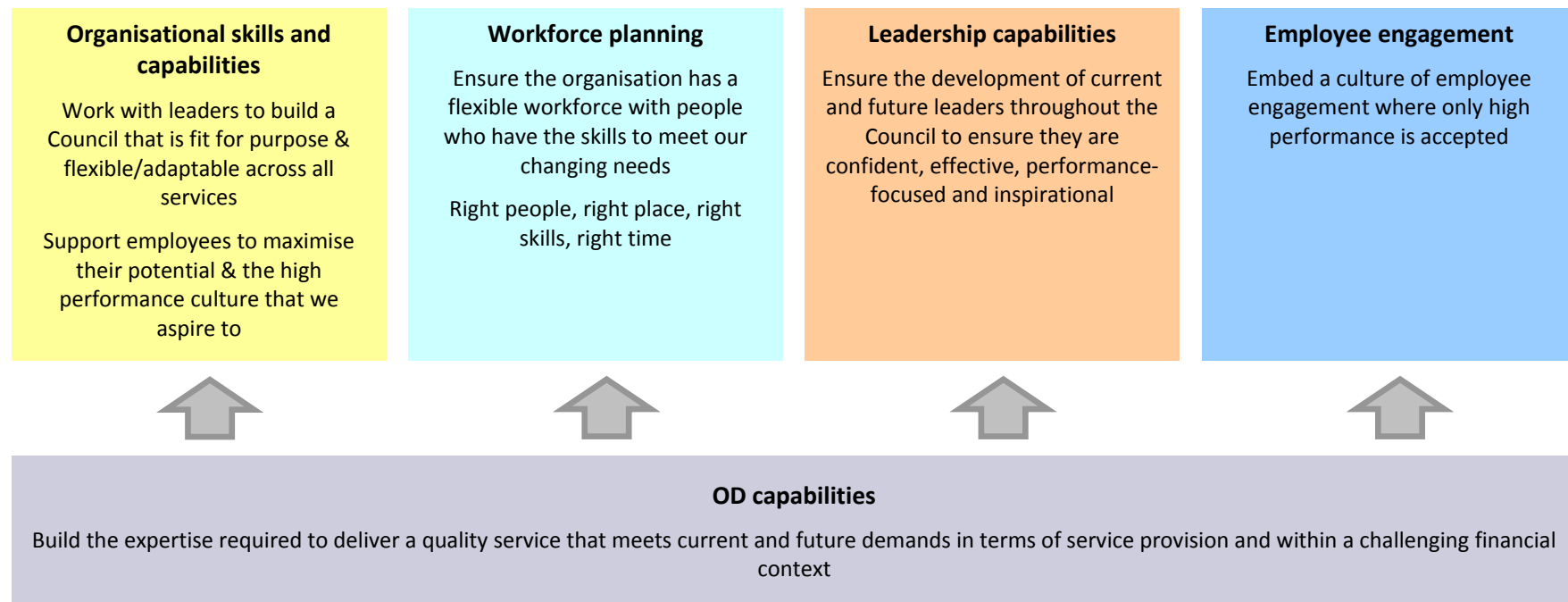
### Strategic intent

Organisational Development is a planned, systematic approach to improving organisational effectiveness – one that aligns strategy, infrastructure and people.

### Outcome

To have a motivated, engaged and high performing workforce, capable of delivering quality services, organisational objectives and effective change within budget and policy.

The OD strategy is made up of five key work streams. Robust OD capabilities are the foundation on which the four other work streams will be built:



# Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10am, Tuesday 14 May 2013

## Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) Policy

Item number 7.2

Report number

Wards All

### Links

Coalition pledges

Council outcomes

Single Outcome Agreement [SO2](#)

### Alastair D Maclean

Director of Corporate Governance

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# Executive summary

## Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) Policy

### Summary

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The Council has discretion under Section 2(1) of the Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 to provide financial assistance (discretionary housing payment) to persons who require financial assistance (in addition to benefit to which they are entitled) in order to meet housing costs.

Housing costs are not defined in the regulations but can be interpreted as a claimant's eligible rent and council tax liability.

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 has introduced a range of reforms including a benefit cap, a reduction in housing benefit for under-occupation in social housing and Universal Credit, which will impact on the Discretionary Housing Payment scheme.

A DHP policy has been drafted in response to the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and this is attached at Appendix 1. The policy incorporates the Department for Work and Pensions DHP good practice guidance.

The key aims of the DHP policy are to prevent hardship and to protect families and vulnerable people by sustaining tenancies and to prevent homelessness.

### Recommendations

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It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee:

1. Approve the DHP policy attached at Appendix 1.

### Measures of success

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The success of the DHP policy will be measured through:

- customer satisfaction with awareness of availability, advice and advocacy services provided by the DHP team through application of the DHP policy. This includes increased benefit take up and minimised losses by ensuring people get their full entitlement under the new arrangements.

### Financial impact

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The increasing numbers of people experiencing hardship is expected to lead to a significant increase in demand for DHP. There is a risk that the DHP budget is insufficient to meet the demand welfare reform creates.

## Equalities impact

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The UK Government has prepared Equalities and Human Rights assessments for the welfare reform proposals. The Council will undertake an EHIRA when necessary for any of its proposals.

## Sustainability impact

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Welfare Reform is expected to have general implications for environmental and sustainability outcomes, for example in relation to fuel poverty.

## Consultation and engagement

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The draft policy has been circulated for comment to Council officials within Services for Communities and Housing Associations within the Edinburgh area and amended accordingly.

## Background reading / external references

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Recent reports to committee:

[Welfare Reform – further update](#) – Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, 16 April 2013

[Welfare Reform - Scottish Welfare Fund arrangements](#) – Finance and Budget Committee, 21 March 2013

[Welfare Reform – further update](#) – Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, 22 January 2013

[Welfare Reform – update](#) – Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, 4 December 2012

## Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) Policy

### 1. Background

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- 1.1 The report entitled “Welfare Reform – further update” presented to the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee on 16 April 2013 stated that a DHP policy would be drafted to ensure that DHP is distributed equitably to benefit recipients who meet the qualifying criteria.

### 2. Main report

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- 2.1 The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) increased its UK DHP baseline funding of £20m by £40m in 2012-13 to cover welfare reforms in the private rented sector. For 2013-14 the DWP has increased funding by a further £30m to cover under-occupation in social housing and a further £65m for the benefit cap. The funding is aimed specifically at two groups:
- where the property has been significantly adapted for disabled people within the household; and
  - kinship carers, whose Housing benefit is reduced because of a bedroom being used by , or kept free for, kinship children.
- 2.2 The Council’s DHP allocation from the DWP for 2013/14 is £1,347,299, substantially more than for 2012/13. Local authorities are able to increase the DWP allocation by up to 1.5 times from their own resources. This is known as “matched funding”. It has not been possible to provide “matched funding” in the Council’s 2013/14 budget and therefore the Council will operate within the DWP allocation stated above increase. Demand on this fund will be closely monitored to ensure the most vulnerable customers can be supported throughout the year. Future updates to Committee on welfare reform will report on the demand for and allocation of DHP funds.
- 2.3 3,886 tenants currently under occupy their property. It is estimated that approximately £3.9m of rental income will need to be collected directly from tenants as a result of reductions in Housing Benefit due to under occupation. There are also significant implications for the Council’s registered social landlord (RSL) partners. It is estimated that there are currently 1,861 RSL tenants under occupying their property. This will require RSLs to collect approximately £1.5m of rental income directly from tenants.

- 2.4 Early indications are that around 50 families in mainstream Council, Housing Association and Private Sector tenancies within the Council area may be affected by the benefits cap. The DWP will identify the tenants affected and will provide a list in advance of when those claimants will be affected. It is anticipated 450 tenants living in temporary/supported accommodation will be affected by the benefits cap.
- 2.5 The overarching objective of the DHP policy is that each application is considered on its own merit and it is ensured that the principles of fairness, reasonableness and consistency are adhered to in all cases.

### 3. Recommendations

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3.1 It is recommended that the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee:

3.1.1 Approve the DHP policy attached at Appendix 1.

## Alastair D Maclean

Director of Corporate Governance

### Links

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#### Coalition pledges

#### Council outcomes

#### Single Outcome Agreement

SO2 – Edinburgh’s citizens experience improved health and wellbeing, with reduced inequalities in health

#### Appendices

Appendix 1 - Discretionary Housing Payment Policy

# **DRAFT**

## **City of Edinburgh Council** **Discretionary Housing Payment Policy**

### **1 Introduction**

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) were introduced as a result of the Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001. DHPs are not payments of benefit but payments to be made at the discretion of the City of Edinburgh Council (the Council) for those that are having difficulty in meeting their housing costs. However DHPs cannot meet expenditure which is not eligible for benefit.

The amount of funding available for DHPs is strictly limited by legislation and the Council has to manage applications within the maximum budget set out each financial year. The Council cannot exceed the maximum budget.

All applications will be considered on a case by case basis and awards will be made at the discretion of the Council. This policy document provides a framework for outlining circumstances under which DHPs may be awarded. The examples given are not exhaustive and other circumstances will be considered.

### **2 Policy Aims and Objectives**

To distribute equitably the DHP funding to benefit claimants that meet the qualifying criteria, and to promote the following Council objectives:

- Prevention of homelessness;
- Alleviating poverty;
- Sustaining tenancies and safeguarding residents in their homes;
- Preventing hardship;
- Supporting vulnerable young people in the transition to adult life;
- Supporting young people to achieve good educational outcomes;
- Encouraging residents to seek and sustain employment;
- Keeping families together;
- Supporting domestic abuse victims who are trying to move to a place of safety;
- Supporting the work of foster and kinship carers; and
- Support disabled people remain in adapted properties

The City of Edinburgh Council will ensure that as far as possible all customers are made aware of the availability of DHP and that all agencies supporting customers are made aware of the funding available and how it can be utilised to support their client group.

The DHP policy will be published on the Councils website

### **3 Eligibility**

In order to be considered for a DHP the claimant must:

- Be in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit (with Housing Element) and have a rental liability; and
- Have a shortfall between the amount of benefit being received and the amount of rent that is due to be paid; and
- Be having difficulty in meeting the shortfall in their rental liability; or
- Be having difficulty in meeting rent deposit or rent in advance.

### **4 When DHP will be Paid:**

DHP awards will be made to eligible claimants in the following circumstances:

- Where the property has been significantly adapted for a disabled person or people within the household;
- Where kinship carers, Housing Benefit is reduced because of a bedroom being used by, or kept free for, a kinship child or children;
- Where a child will have a significant birthday within one year from 01 April 2013 which would entitle the household to an extra bedroom;
- Where a claimant or their partner is within one year of pensionable age from 01 April 2013;
- Where a member of the household requires an overnight carer;
- Where a household is affected by the benefits cap and in mainstream accommodation;
- Where the claimant or their partner is pregnant and the birth of the child will increase the household's bedroom entitlement.

### **5 When DHP may be Paid:**

The following examples outline circumstances where DHP applications will be considered but not guaranteed. The list is not exhaustive and all applications will be considered on a case by case basis:

- Where a claimant is chronically sick or disabled;
- Where a claimant is experiencing exceptional hardship;
- To cover the reasonable costs of renting a particular type of accommodation to suit a particular need;
- Where a member of the household moves out of the property and this reduces the household's bedroom entitlement;
- Where a parent does not have full time custody of children but has regular overnight access visits. Regular access will be considered to be 1 night per week;
- Where a household is affected by the benefits cap and in temporary accommodation;

- To facilitate a move to a different area where support is available from family members or friends and it is clear the support is essential to the household;
- To cover the rent shortfall of accommodation which is either too big or too expensive, where the tenancy started at a time when the claimant could easily afford the rent without help from Housing Benefit;
- To facilitate a move to a smaller or more affordable home that would allow the household to cover their housing costs.

## **6 When DHP will not be Paid**

DHP will not be paid to a claimant under the following circumstances:

- Where a tenancy was not affordable when taken on (except in exceptional circumstances where no other reasonable alternative was available);
- Where benefit fraud has been committed;
- To reduce water and wastewater charges;
- Where a benefit is in payment is subject to a reduction direction, sanction or suspension;
- To cover a reduction in Housing Benefit resulting from a Housing Benefit overpayment which is being recovered from ongoing entitlement;
- To cover service charges which are ineligible for Housing Benefit;
- Where an increase in rent has been made by the landlord to cover rent arrears;
- Where non dependant deductions that are not being paid by the non dependant (except in exceptional circumstances);
- DHPs will not be awarded simply because a claimant is in debt. However a view will be taken on the type, reason and level of debt and the actions that the claimant has taken to repay the amounts outstanding. Claimants will be expected to take a reasonable attitude towards debt and only borrow what they can reasonably repay. Claimants must be seen to be making regular payments before help from the DHP fund would be considered appropriate and should take Money Advice;
- Where the tenant is entitled to another benefit that they are not already claiming.

## **7 Level and Period of Award**

- The level and period of award will be based on the individual circumstances of the applicant;
- In the case of a shortfall the amount of DHP will not exceed the weekly eligible rent;

- In the case of lump sum payments, no period will apply but due regard will be given to the DHP funding available, for example a rent deposit;
- Payment may be made to the applicant, agent, appointee, and landlord or directly into the rent account;
- Payment of DHP will stop if an applicant fails to disclose a material fact or obtained the funds under false pretences or the payment was made in error;
- Claimants are required to notify the Benefits Service of any change in their circumstances. The level and period of award of DHP will be reviewed if there is a change in the circumstances of the claimant and payments will be reduced or stopped if no longer required.

## **8 Backdating an Award**

- Each backdated claim will be reviewed on its own merits and the claimant should explain the reason for the delay in making the DHP claim;
- DHP can only be considered for a period when the claimant was in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

## **9 Recovery of Overpaid DHP**

- The City of Edinburgh Council will recover all overpaid DHP unless the award was due to Local Authority error.

## **10 How to Apply for DHP**

- Requests must be made on an application form. The form can be obtained online at [www.edinburgh.gov.uk](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk), by telephoning 0131 469 5000 or collected at the local office situated at 249 High Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1YJ;
- No application is required for any claimant that falls under Section 4 (When DHP will be Paid).

## **11 The Right of Review**

- There is no statutory right of appeal against a DHP decision. The applicant (or their appointee or agent) who disagrees with a DHP decision may request a review of that decision from the Benefits Service;
- A request for a review must be made in writing within one calendar month of the written decision about the DHP being issued to the benefit claimant;
- An officer from the Benefits Service who was not involved in the original decision will consider the request for the review;
- The reviewing officer will notify the customer of their decision in writing;



- If on receipt of the decision the claimant continues to feel aggrieved, then they can make a complaint under the Councils Corporate Complaints Procedure;
- A claimant may also have recourse to a judicial review.

## **10 Monitoring Arrangements**

The Benefits Assessor when making a decision to award DHP will record the following information about the award:

- Has the claimant been affected by one of the key welfare reforms, namely: the benefit cap, social sector size criteria, Local Housing Allowance reforms or a combination of the reforms;
- The total amount paid to the claimant;
- The intended outcome of the award, for example, to help with short term rental costs until the claimant secures alternative accommodation or to help with ongoing rental costs for a disabled person in adapted accommodation;
- A monthly report detailing the level of DHP applications received, the decisions made and the level of DHP committed for the financial year will be forwarded to the Benefits Manager for monitoring purposes, and to ensure that the statutory limit is not exceeded;
- The level of spend will form part of the Councils monthly budget monitoring of Housing Benefit and will also be included in the bi monthly report on Welfare Reform to the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee.

## **11 Policy Review**

- The City of Edinburgh Councils DHP policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if appropriate by the Benefits Manager and the Councils Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee will be asked to approve any material changes.

## Appendix

### Examples of how DHP can be used

1)

Mr and Mrs Smith rent a three bedroom property for £340.00 per week. They have two children and receive the following benefits:

Jobseekers Allowance - £111.45

Child Tax Credit - £88.07

Child benefit - £33.70

Housing Benefit - £340.00

Total welfare benefits - £573.22

The benefit cap for Mr and Mrs Smith is £500.00 per week. Therefore, their award of Housing Benefit is reduced to £266.78 per week (reduction of £73.22).

Mr Smith has been unemployed for one year and has had difficulties finding employment in his usual vocation. He is currently attending his local Work Programme provider for support to find work.

In addition, Mr and Mrs Smith's oldest child is 15 years old and in the process of completing her GCSE's at school. Mr and Mrs Smith have found a cheaper property that would take them below the benefit cap in another area but it would mean their oldest child would have to move schools. They believe this would have a negative impact on their child's education.

DHP of up to £73.22 could be awarded until Mr or Mrs Smith move into work or their eldest child completes her GCSE's.

2)

Mr and Mrs Collins have recently become kinship carers for their three grandchildren after the children's parents were no longer able to take care of them. The local authority has re-housed the family from their one bedroom flat to a three bedroom property

This change in circumstances has caused an increase in the amount of benefits that the household receives meaning that the benefit cap will now be applied to the household.

Mr and Mrs Collins don't believe it would be appropriate to move into employment straight away as the children need time to adapt to their new circumstances.

DHP could be paid until Mr and Mrs Collins are able to move into employment or adapt their circumstances so that the benefit cap no longer applies.

3)

Mr and Mrs Thom rent a four bedroom house from a registered housing provider. They have two children, a girl aged seven and a boy aged five. They receive Housing Benefit to cover the full rent of £90 per week.

Under the new size limit rules, they are considered to be under-occupying the house by two bedrooms as the children are both under ten years old and would be expected to share a bedroom. As they are under-occupying by two bedrooms a 25% reduction of £22.50 would be applied to the eligible rent meaning they would now receive Housing Benefit of £67.50 per week.

Mrs Thom is in a wheelchair and significant adaptations have been made to the house to make it more accessible. If the family moved to a smaller property, it would need to be adapted at considerable expense. DHP of £22.50 per week would therefore be awarded to enable the family to remain in their current adapted house.

4)

Harry has to move from his bed-sit in central Edinburgh as his Housing Benefit no longer meets his rent. His only income is from a part-time job with his net pay amounting to £100 per week.

With the assistance of the Council, he finds a bed-sit in another area within the LHA rate with a rent of £101 per week. He now has bus fares of £20 per week instead of being able to walk to work. This leaves him struggling to pay his rent and meet his day- to-day living expenses.

He discusses his problems with the Citizen's Advice Bureau and they suggest he applies for DHP. One of the Council's objectives is to use DHPs to help people maintain their employment and it will consider disregarding fares to work in deciding on the amount of a DHP.

The Council awards a DHP of £13 which is the difference between his Housing Benefit award and what the award would be if the fares to work were included in the disregard.