

Business Bulletin

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 5 November 2020

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

Convener:	Members:	Contact:
<p>Convener Councillor Kate Campbell</p>  <p>Vice Convener Councillor Mandy Watt</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Chas Booth • Cllr Jim Campbell • Cllr David Key • Cllr Kevin Lang • Cllr John McLellan • Cllr Claire Miller • Cllr Gordon Munro • Cllr Iain Whyte • Cllr Norman Work 	<p>Jamie Macrae Committee Officer Tel: 0131 553 8242</p> <p>Sarah Stirling Assistant Committee Officer Tel: 0131 529 3009</p>

Recent News

Edinburgh Living

The first new Edinburgh Living homes at Craigmillar are due to be delivered in the autumn, this takes the total number of homes to 184. These homes are the first to be delivered following the lockdown period. There has been interest in the homes ahead of full marketing with over half of the homes reserved before being handed over to Edinburgh Living. Officers are working together to connect working homelessness households with mid market rent homes where this is a suitable option. Over the next six months new homes will continue to be delivered at Craigmillar and North Sighthill.

During the lockdown period Edinburgh Living's management and maintenance provider, Lowther Homes, has supported tenants and continued to arrange emergency repairs. Lowther staff are continuing to provide strong tenancy engagement, a phased return to routine repairs services and have resumed lettings services for Edinburgh Living homes.

In 2019 a commitment was made to investigate opportunities to engage with the private sector to deliver more homes for Edinburgh Living, over and above those currently in the pipeline. Officers are exploring an option for Edinburgh Living to lease homes on a private sector site with a view to developing a business case for consideration by Finance and Resources Committee and Council.

The Edinburgh Living annual update including financial statements will be presented to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee in January 2021.

Granton Waterfront Core Path improvements

As part of the wider Granton Waterfront regeneration, the Council has secured £15,000 in the latest batch of Sustrans "Places for Everyone" funding towards design

Background

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work for the improvement of a Core Path running between Waterfront Avenue and West Shore Road (see Appendix 1), with the potential to secure additional funding towards the improvement works themselves.

The Core Path will be improved by giving it a better quality surface, adding lighting to unlit sections and other measures intended to make it safer and more pleasant for users. Design work is underway and it is hoped that works on site could commence in early 2021.

Kickstart

On 8 July 2020, Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced the £2bn Kickstart jobs scheme to help young people who had been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. In September, details were released of how the fund will operate.

Organisations can bid for a minimum of 30 places as a direct employer or can become an intermediary and work with a range of employers to bring them together in order to allocate a minimum of 30 places.

The paid placements will be funded at minimum wage level – although employers are encouraged to ‘top-up’ to the real living wage where possible. Placements must run for a minimum of 25 hours per week for six months. They must also include ongoing employability support and employment preparation and provide a real opportunity to develop experience and skills for future careers.

Referrals will come from Jobcentre and participants must be aged 16-24 and be in receipt of a qualifying benefit.

Edinburgh is already well covered for intermediary provision with the Chamber of Commerce, Capital City Partnership and Enable already signed up to be intermediaries. Discussions have taken place with the providers and the Council will refer any employer enquiries on to these organisations.

Background

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Background

Officers are currently working cross departmentally to develop a proposal to offer opportunities across various sectors within the Council. Early discussions are underway with both the Early Years team and Health and Social Care to investigate how this initiative could support the ongoing recruitment of staffing in these areas and will work with other departments across the Council where this could add value to future recruitment.

Re-Commissioning Of Employability Services

The Council currently funds third-party organisations to deliver employability and in-work support to Edinburgh citizens.

Due to significant changes in the labour market and the new operational context as a result of Covid-19, three of these services are being reviewed using a co-production methodology to ensure they remain fit for purpose and value for money:

- Supported Employment Service (All in Edinburgh);
- Complex Needs Employability Service (Encompass); and
- Edinburgh Targeted and Integrated Employability Service (Next Step).

Two of these contracts – Supported Employment Service and Complex Needs Employability are due to come to an end in March 2021 and would be due for recommissioning with an expected start date of April 2021. The third contract, Edinburgh Targeted and Integrated Employability Service, was awarded as a two plus two-year contract, with the initial contract period due to end in March 2021.

Officers are working closely with colleagues in Procurement and Legal to extend the current contracts for a six-month period from 1 April 2021 up until 30 September 2021. This will allow sufficient time to consult with clients and providers to review and reprocur replacement services if required.

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<p>The outcome of the co-production process will be reported back to committee in the new year.</p>	
<p><u>Regeneration Capital Grant Fund</u></p> <p>Of the seven projects for which applications for support were made to the 2021/22 round of the Scottish Government’s Regeneration Capital Grant Fund, two have been successful at stage one: “Granton Station” and “Nourishing Leith Hub”. The deadline for stage two applications is 5 November 2020; officers and partners are working to prepare applications in the necessary timescale. A final decision on successful projects is expected in January 2021. Officers will also continue to investigate alternative funding options for the five projects that were not successful.</p>	<p><u>Contact:</u></p> <p>David.cooper@edinburgh.gov.uk</p> <p>0131 529 6233</p>
<p><u>Progress on Mixed Use Developments</u></p> <p>Officers have continued to progress the Council’s mixed-use development projects at Fountainbridge, Meadowbank and Powderhall. The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the programme but this has been minimised as far as possible. A short update on each project is provided as follows:</p> <p><u>Fountainbridge</u></p> <p>Officers have continued to move forward with the procurement of a partner to work with in the delivery of the development strategy for fountainbridge. Engagement with the local community representatives has been maintained and they have been involved as far as possible in the process. The final stage of the selection is now underway and should be completed later this year although this will depend on the level of negotiation required. Enabling works on the site are also now back underway so that the site is ready to develop as soon as possible.</p> <p><u>Meadowbank</u></p> <p>A masterplan for the site surrounding the sports centre was submitted to Planning in February 2020. A</p>	<p><u>Contact:</u></p> <p>David.cooper@edinburgh.gov.uk</p> <p>0131 529 6233</p>

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determination date has not been set at this time owing to Covid-19 limitations. The masterplan proposes 596 homes of which at least 35% will be affordable along with space for a GP surgery and other commercial and community units. The proposal includes an integrated transport strategy that seeks to minimise car use and promote sustainable forms of travel along with an integrated greening strategy that delivers communal and private greenspace to encourage biodiversity and maximises tree retention.

The Sports Centre construction site was closed in line with Scottish Government Guidance in March this year but recommenced in June.

Powderhall

The Powderhall mixed use development continues to progress with the submission of the Planning Application for the refurbishment of the former stable block being made in August. Funded by the Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund and the Council's City Strategic Investment Fund, the Powderhall Stables project will comprehensively restore a category B-listed 1890s former stable block at 165 Broughton Road, bringing it back into use as modern work and events space. This will be the first phase of development on the site followed by the new early years building which is due to submit a planning application later this month.

Progress continues in parallel to develop a masterplan and appoint a contractor/developer to deliver around 200 new mixed tenure homes on the remainder of the site.

A briefing session for Committee will be provided in due course.

Scottish Government Consultation on a Licensing Scheme and Planning Control Areas for Short Term Lets in Scotland

The consultation seeks views on Scottish Government's detailed proposals for the regulation of short-term lets which will form the basis for secondary legislation to be

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Background

laid in Parliament in December 2020. The target implementation of regulations is April 2021. Comments were requested by Friday 16 October. The consultation paper is available online at <https://consult.gov.scot/housing-services-policy-unit/short-term-lets-licensing-scheme/>

The consultation paper addresses three key areas and seeks views on issues arising and possible ways of addressing these issues:

- definition of short-term lets;
- the establishment of control areas under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019; and
- the establishment of a licensing scheme under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.

A response has been submitted by officers after consultation with the Short Term Lets Member – Officer Working Group. A report will be prepared for committees in the next cycle.

Tenant Contact and Assistance

The rent service for tenants has been maintained during the current Covid-19 pandemic. Since the start of lockdown over 30,000 contacts have been made with tenants to help with any changes in their household incomes and to support them to pay rent where they can to avoid getting into debt they cannot afford. Tenants have been reassured that they are not at risk of losing their home at this time, but communications continue to reinforce the importance of paying rent and the advice and assistance that is available to help.

Formal debt recovery action through the courts was suspended following the implementation of lockdown measures in March. The Sheriff Court in Edinburgh recommenced in October using video conferencing. Court capacity is restricted and existing cases in court are being carefully managed in line with revised court guidelines.

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Background

Court action remains a last resort measure for tenants who fail to engage or make reasonable payments and the serving of a notice will often trigger a response from tenants who have not responded to any prior contact. The Scottish Government brought in measure during the Covid-19 pandemic to extend the notice period given to tenants before court action can be taken to six months. During this period officer continue to work with tenants to reduce their debt, which often results in no formal action being required.

Edinburgh Poverty Commission

The final report of the Edinburgh Poverty Commission was published on 30 September 2020. The report makes a call to action for the city to aim to end poverty in Edinburgh by 2030 and sets out six action areas and one cultural change that are needed to deliver that aim. The Commission's findings include calls for action, by the Council, employers, Government and other stakeholders, to provide people in Edinburgh with access to fair work that provides enough to live on, a decent home people can afford to live in, income security that offers a real lifeline, opportunities to boost prospects, connections to a city we all belong to, and equality in health and wellbeing.

On 6 October 2020 the Council's Policy and Sustainability Committee agreed to adopt the Commission's aim to end poverty in Edinburgh by 2030, and the four specific targets the Commission's final report sets out. In doing so, the Committee agreed to consider a report on Council actions needed to respond to the Commission findings. This report will be considered by Committee on 1 December 2020, with further reports to executive committees as required.

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Edinburgh Economy Watch

The latest version of [Edinburgh Economy Watch](#) was prepared in September 2020 and provides an update on indicators showing the health of the economy during the

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impact of Covid-19. Economic output has grown over consecutive months but remains lower than pre-pandemic levels. It was estimated in Edinburgh that 90,000 residents were furloughed from work at the end of July 2020 and the city also witnessed the fastest growth in claims for out of work benefits in Scotland and also the fastest growth amongst major UK cities. There is some evidence to support that growth in out of work benefits have been higher for women and people aged under 25 years. Edinburgh historically has been a strong performer in the labour market with very low unemployment rates and higher wages compared to other cities and parts of Scotland. This means that Edinburgh was probably starting at least in employment terms from a healthy position. That said this does not underplay, as reported in Economy Watch the extra 26,000 residents claiming universal credit in August 2020 compared to last year.

Businesses in Scotland were also reporting difficult times is operating with very limited cash reserves. As reported in Economy Watch 41% of businesses in the UK reported through the Business Covid-19 monitor survey are operating with limited cash reserves. This proportion has persisted over consecutive months. Job creation from new businesses entering the market seems at risk. There are early signs that business registration in Scotland is falling and the change in natural business growth is turning negative. As reported in Economy Watch the growth in Scottish businesses up to June 2020 is slowing, and 2020 has seen two quarters of negative change in Business VAT and PAYE registrations.

Since the publication of Economy Watch, new unemployment data was published in mid-October showing July 2019 to June 2020 unemployed was 3.2% for Edinburgh, up from 2.6% in April 2019 to March 2020. This is the modelled based unemployment measure, Scotland's reported at rate of 3.3% for the year to June 2020 and the year to March 2020. At the UK level more recent and frequent data on unemployment is provided. In the UK the unemployment rate increased to its highest level in over

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three years. The unemployment rate grew to 4.5% in the three months to August, compared with 4.1% in the previous quarter. Most expect unemployment to rise further as a number of potential drivers are activated such as the end of the government's furlough scheme and new local and national restrictions are put in place that limit business operations and influence job certainty and prospects.

Scottish Government's Youth Guarantee

The Scottish Government confirmed in August that £60 million is to be invested in a Youth Guarantee, which aims to give all young people access to work, training or education.

The funding will be allocated as follows:

- £30 million through local authorities to help local partnerships to deliver employability support for young people;
- £10 million to create additional opportunities in colleges;
- £10 million additional funding for Developing the Young Workforce, the Scottish Government's internationally recognised Youth Employment Strategy; and
- £10 million to support pathways to apprenticeships.

The Scottish Government report and implementation plan for this was published in September.

Early discussions both nationally and with partners locally have focussed on the following report recommendations:

- Introducing an employer recruitment incentive to contribute up to 50% of wages for young people who need the most help;
- calling for the public sector to create more opportunities for young people; and

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- providing support to Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs) to take on a young person if they are able.

It is anticipated that there will be flexibility for local authorities to help address needs specific to their own area. In Edinburgh this would enable the Council to offer digital and mental health support which has been highlighted by local providers as required as well as to build more capacity into current provision where required.

A final announcement of the level of funding and clarity around what it can be spent on is expected during week commencing 2 November 2020 however early indications are that the City of Edinburgh Council will receive approximately £2 million to provide employability solutions for those age 16-24 who have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

For information, the original Edinburgh Guarantee initiative successfully contributed to an improvement of in school leaver destinations in Edinburgh between 2011 and 2019 of 12%.

Background

Appendix 1
Granton Core Path

