

# Business Bulletin

## Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 2 September 2021

# Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

Convener:	Members:	Contact:
<p data-bbox="199 331 566 409">Convener Councillor Kate Campbell</p>  <p data-bbox="188 853 513 925">Vice Convener Councillor Mandy Watt</p> 	<ul data-bbox="630 327 995 705" style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cllr Susan Rae</li><li>• Cllr Jim Campbell</li><li>• Cllr Graham Hutchison</li><li>• Cllr David Key</li><li>• Cllr Kevin Lang</li><li>• Cllr John McLellan</li><li>• Cllr Alex Staniforth</li><li>• Cllr Gordon Munro</li><li>• Cllr Norman Work</li></ul>	<p data-bbox="1118 320 1398 434">Jamie Macrae Committee Officer Tel: 0131 553 8242</p> <p data-bbox="1118 488 1414 645">Sarah Stirling Assistant Committee Officer Tel: 0131 529 3009</p>

## Recent News

## Background

### **Western Villages – Planning Approval**

On [Wednesday 23 June 2021](#) , Development Management Sub Committee granted planning permission for Western Villages. The site is planned to be the first phase of Council led regeneration within Granton Waterfront and will deliver 444 new high-quality homes for social (195), Midmarket (62), Market (63) rent, and for sale (124). Alongside new homes, the development will create high-quality public realm and green space. The homes will be net zero carbon with all heat and hot water coming from renewable sources generated locally on the site through a communal air source heat pump farm. The building fabric of the homes will be enhanced with ‘Passiv’ principles to ensure the demand for space heating is low.

A place-based approach has been adopted in the design of the site. Streets are people focussed connecting to a central, semi-wild green space with natural play areas, biodiverse planting, and amenity space creating a strong identity and a shared asset for the community to enjoy while boosting health and well-being.

A new active travel network from Pennywell Roundabout to the promenade will also be delivered alongside the development. This provides a sustainable and healthy connection between the new homes and existing neighbourhoods, amenities and the shoreline.

The stage 1 building warrant has also been approved and construction works are expected to commence in Spring 2022.

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### **LAR Housing Trust: refurbishment of homes at Niddrie Mains Terrace**

LAR Housing Trust has completed the refurbishment of a housing block at 65 Niddrie Mains Terrace which was formally used by the Council as a Day Service Hub. Finance and Resources Committee approved the disposal of 65 Niddrie Mains Terrace to LAR Housing Trust (LAR) on 5 March 2020. The property was vacated by the Council several years ago and required

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complete renovation to bring it back into use. Working with officers in Housing and the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership (EHSCP), the opportunity for the purchase of the property was identified to help provide much needed accommodation for adults with learning disabilities and autism.

The completed homes will be leased to the EHSCP to provide homes for those with specialist housing needs. The tenants, three of whom are relocating from hospital settings, have already been selected by the EHSCP and the flats will also include accommodation for carers.

The extensive refurbishment included new wiring, new plumbing, new windows and new utilities, as well as, new kitchens and bathrooms. Externally it included re-harling, removing chimneys, significant landscaping and some further work on the roof.

The project has been welcomed by the EHSCP as a lack of suitably robust and accessible housing can lead to people living in inappropriate placements away from their local communities or living in hospital.

## **Discretionary Fund**

As noted in previous Business Bulletins for Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, additional funding was allocated to the Discretionary fund nationally and as a result Edinburgh's allocation increased by £10,066,139. This additional funding has been used to 'top up' recipients of the initial grants from £2,000 to £4,000 and criteria was relaxed to consider overall impact of Covid-19 restrictions rather than just those introduced since October 2020. Additional funding was also awarded to businesses with employees, to encourage staff retention, and a top up payment of £1,000 was made to all recipients of the Taxi and Private Hire Driver Support Fund.

After running two rounds for general applications and making the top-up payment to the Taxi and Private Hire

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Driver Support Fund recipients, a total of 5,829 payments have been awarded:

- 2,314 general applications received;
- 1,422 applications approved and paid;
- 891 applications rejected (primarily due to being eligible for other funding or not providing enough evidence of financial impact);
- One application withdrawn; and
- 4,407 taxi and private hire drivers.

Payments have been made to a total of £11,709,000, leaving a balance of £1,153,289, as at 23/7 2021.

Following discussions with Federation of Small Business, Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce, Social Enterprise Edinburgh as well as other city Councils, neighbouring Councils and Scottish Government, phase three was launched on Monday 9 August 2021. This includes the following elements:

- Top up payment of £1,500 for previous travel agent and tour guide recipients of the Discretionary Fund in respect of the ongoing challenges impacting these sectors;
- Allocation of £150,000 towards Creative Edinburgh re-opening their Practice Support Fund for creative freelancers;
- Allocation of £100,000 for a Traders Association and Business Engagement Fund for constituted groups to apply for up to £10,000 for the purposes of projects relating to improving trading conditions related to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions; and
- Invitation to the previous recipients of the Discretionary Fund award who have not been able to access subsequent funding to apply for a final top up payment provided they are able to demonstrate continuing impact due to Covid-19 restrictions. Final award amount will be determined once application window is closed and volume of applicants assessed.

**Forever Edinburgh update**

In April 2021, The Official Guide to Edinburgh and its associated social media channels rebranded to Forever Edinburgh (FE) to coincide with a new consumer campaign, driven by the Council in partnership with Edinburgh Tourism Action Group (ETAG), VisitScotland, Edinburgh Airport and other stakeholders. The campaign's primary aim is to raise awareness of Edinburgh as a visitor destination among the domestic visitor market and support recovery efforts.

To fund this activity, FE secured £45,000 from VisitScotland's Market Readiness fund and a further £85,000 from the Regional Recovery Fund made available from Scottish Government.

The creative proposition [Story Never Ends](#) focuses on Edinburgh's unique history and enduring spirit by telling fascinating stories to inspire visits. The campaign is geo-targeting domestic overnight visitors in key English and Scottish cities on social media, Google, YouTube, and retargeting on popular bookings sites like Trainline.com.

The campaign is organised into six summer themes with video and website content. Over 100 new photographs have been produced, which is also available in a [toolkit](#) for local businesses and travel trade to use in their own promotional activity.

To support regional recovery efforts, a new [City+](#) section has been created on edinburgh.org with freshly written regional content. The goal is to increase visitor dwell time in Edinburgh by providing more reasons for visitors to stay longer but also to disperse visitors from Edinburgh to the regions. Furthermore, the recently updated press pack now features regional content so journalists and social influencers can support FE in its regional recovery efforts.

The campaign has been very popular with increasing support from industry using #ForeverEdinburgh and huge support from tourism businesses to enable press trips with complimentary accommodation, hospitality and

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experiences in return for exposure. As at 23 July 2021, the campaign has had:

- 27,000 video views + more on social and partner channels
  - [Folklore and Myth](#)
  - [Shores and Waterways](#)
  - [Outdoor Adventure](#);
- 3.4 million reached on paid social media + significantly more on organic;
- 7,800 hashtag uses on Instagram; and
- 61,000 website page views.

Going forward, three new summer videos will go live from the start of August until October and a new funding application has been submitted to in partnership with ETAG to VisitScotland. If the application is successful, the Story Never Ends campaign will be extended into winter and run from October–March with fresh winter themes.

Finally, a new travel trade section on [edinburgh.org](http://edinburgh.org) is under development and will support the city in its sustainable recovery from the pandemic.

### **Edinburgh Project SEARCH**

As previously reported to Committee, the 2020/21 Edinburgh Project SEARCH (EPS) delivery was severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. 12 young people completed the SQA Employability Award at Edinburgh College with support from Into Work, NHS Lothian and Council staff. However, due to the restrictions that were in place, they were unable to complete placements which are an integral part of the programme.

Due to the experience in 2020/21 and advice from senior management in NHS around the uncertainty of future delivery of activity due to Covid-19, the steering group for EPS, consisting of representatives from Edinburgh College, NHS Lothian, Into Work and Council officers, have agreed that the 2021/22 programme will

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be put on hold and not start in August 2021. There is a potential to look at a January start, however this will be discussed by the Steering Group in September.

In recognition that a number of young people have had the academic experience associated with EPS, but not the work experience element, discussion has taken place around the Council's ability to offer supported work placements under the Young Person's Guarantee programme to these young people. Officers are confident that there are a number of placement offers that would be suitable for young people with a disability or long term health condition available within Council departments. They are currently investigating whether it would be possible to offer six month funded placements to compliment the prior learning that the young people have completed.

The young people would be supported in placements by the Council's Job Coach, who would ensure that necessary adjustments, support for the department mentors and daily contact with the young people was available. This would go some way to providing a similar experience to the original EPS programme and would help prepare the young people to move into future employment opportunities.

The decision to not start the programme in August will allow time to consider the impact of the further lifting of restrictions, plan for future delivery of EPS, carry out recruitment of the additional Job Coach and work towards either a January start or an expanded programme in 2022/23.

### **Automatic Opening Vents (AOV) Repairs**

On 3 June 2021, Committee received a deputation from the Moredun Residents Association and agreed to receive an update in this Bulletin on the installation of AOVs in the six Moredun Tower Blocks.

The AOVs within the blocks are designed to disperse smoke in the event of a fire. There are different types of AOVs in place, at present, which are due to be replaced. Works have been tendered on a number of occasions

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but, unfortunately, none of the contractors returned a tender.

The specification has now been revised and a tender was published on Public Contract Scotland on 26 July 2021 with an anticipated return date of 20 August. It is anticipated that the replacement of AOVs will start in the autumn with a planned completion by the end of the year.

### **Affordable Housing: Resource Planning Assumptions**

Resource Planning Assumptions have been announced by Scottish Government for the Affordable Housing Supply Programme; the national programme of grant funding for affordable housing. In Edinburgh this funding is managed by the City of Edinburgh Council.

For the period 2016/17 to 2020/21, Scottish Government allocated £190 million for Edinburgh and, due to robust performance in delivering affordable housing and a strong pipeline, a further £40 million was secured. This new announcement commits almost £234 million for affordable housing in Edinburgh from 2021/22 to 2025/26. This is an increase of £44 million, roughly 23% more than the funding committed over the last five years.

The financial certainty this announcement gives will help the Council and our Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners to forward plan, acquire sites and secure much needed affordable homes.

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### **Scottish Home Awards Finalists**

The Council's Development and Regeneration Team within the Place Directorate have been shortlisted in the 'Social Housing Developer of the Year' category which recognises achievements in the delivery of new-build affordable homes in Scotland. The other organisations shortlisted for this award are Caledonia Housing Association and Eildon Housing Association.

Our Craigmillar Town Centre development has also been shortlisted for the following categories –

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'Affordable Housing Development of the Year' and 'Housing Regeneration Project of the Year'. Both of these are nominations for the Council in partnership with CCG (Scotland) [the housebuilder] and Anderson Bell Christie [the architects/designers]. Craigmillar Town Centre is the latest phase of housing-led regeneration delivered by the Council and comprises 194 high-quality, energy efficient, affordable homes for rent by the Council and Edinburgh Living.

The judging panel assessed more than 130 entries across 18 categories, received from 70 organisations across Scotland. Winners will be revealed at an awards dinner at the DoubleTree by Hilton hotel in Glasgow on Thursday, 16 September 2021.

### **Place Based Investment Programme (2021/22)**

On [25 June 2021](#), the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee agreed the following allocations of the Place Based Investment Programme for 2021/22.

- The Causey: £266,000;
- Craigmillar – 'Meanwhile' site: £60,000;
- Gracemount civic square: £150,000;
- Green Bridge, Balerno: £66,000;
- MacMillan Hub, Pennywell: £250,000;
- Northfield: £230,000;
- Portobello Town Hall: £350,000;
- Rejuvenating Roseburn: £110,000;
- Roseburn Park toilet block conversion: £66,000;
- St. Oswald's Centre: £350,000; and
- Wester Hailes regeneration: £100,000.

Since 25 June, work has been ongoing to progress these projects and ensure funding is spent/committed by the end of 2021/22.

Legal agreements have been signed with Friends of Roseburn Park and Bruntsfield St Oswald's to enable them to draw down funds from the Council to deliver these projects.

Additional match funding has been identified for the Green Bridge, Balerno project – it is proposed to use the

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surplus this will create to enhance paths adjacent to the bridge.

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