

Business Bulletin

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 9 March 2023

Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

Convener:	Members:	Contact:
<p>Convener: Councillor Jane Meagher</p> 	<p>Councillor Graeme Bruce Councillor Jack Caldwell Councillor Kate Campbell Councillor Stuart Dobbin Councillor Pauline Flannery Councillor Simita Kumar Councillor Ben Parker Councillor Susan Rae Councillor Mandy Watt Councillor Iain Whyte</p>	<p>Jamie Macrae Committee Officer Tel: 0131 553 8242</p>

Forever Edinburgh update – December 2022

Forever Edinburgh are currently delivering the final phase of *The Story Never Ends*, the city's promotional campaign aimed at prospective UK visitors, which launched in April 2021 as part of the city's Covid-19 recovery efforts. The campaign has focussed on raising awareness of Edinburgh's unrivalled and unique visitor offer across the whole city and the impact on building future visitor demand.

To date, the Council's destination marketing team has secured and delivered £355,000 of funded promotional activity to position Edinburgh as the UK's top city break destination among target visitor segments in England and Scotland. The campaign has delivered inspirational Edinburgh messaging and content on a range of online and offline channels. Through partnership working, the campaign secured endorsements from multi-award-winning authors Sir Ian Rankin OBE and Alexander McCall Smith, local personalities Gail Porter, Boogie and Arlene and Radio 1 DJ Stuart Sandeman, and media coverage in a range of titles.

'The Official Guide to Edinburgh' [website](#) run under the Forever Edinburgh brand has seen a huge increase in users and pageviews in comparison to the previous year, as well as when compared with pre-pandemic levels. 'Resident Rewards Edinburgh', a new initiative aimed at engaging City of Edinburgh residents in the city's cultural offer and enabling residents to experience their own city through the eyes of visitors at a discounted price, has been a success and has just reached its first birthday. Building on this, we have strong partner buy-in for 2023 and thanks to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the rewards programme will be enhanced to offer a wider variety of benefits for residents to enjoy all year round.

Throughout 2023 and 2024, the Council will continue to support recovery and respond to emerging market challenges. A new promotional website for Edinburgh is currently under development and updates will be shared with Committee on the programme of the new website,

Contact:

[Fiona Hunter](#), Destination Marketing and Contracts Manager

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the enhanced Resident Reward Programme and a new visitor campaign that will replace The Story Never Ends. It is planned to launch a new TikTok account for Edinburgh (Visit_Edinburgh), to reach new audiences and remain relevant to emerging trends.

Acquisitions and Disposals Update

The overarching objective of the Acquisitions and Disposals policy is to increase supply of Council homes and reduce ongoing management and maintenance costs by consolidating Housing Revenue Account (HRA) assets. The policy seeks to purchase homes where full block consolidation could be achieved over 25 years and divest from blocks where the Council is the minority owner. The purchase of homes is primarily funded from capital receipts from disposals supplemented by Scottish Government grant funding.

Since the implementation of the policy in 2015, 240 homes have been purchased and 131 homes have been sold. This has led to 65 blocks becoming fully Council owned, 100 blocks where the Council has divested its interest and 162 blocks where the Council has further consolidated its majority ownership. Majority ownership enables the Council to secure Scheme Decisions to take forward essential common repairs. The policy is also assisting the Council to increase the number of ground floor homes to help meet wider accessibility needs. Since the policy has been introduced there has been a net increase of 16 ground floor homes to the Council's estate.

The impact of disposals on affordable housing supply is managed by buying more homes than are sold and, where possible, selling homes to Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). A total of 27 homes have been sold to RSLs and let as permanent homes or made available for temporary accommodation.

Background

Contact:

[Elaine Scott](#), Head of Housing Strategy and Development

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Accessible Housing Study

The key findings, recommendations and next steps of an Accessible Housing Study were reported to Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on [1 December 2022](#). It was agreed that an update would be provided to the Committee through the Business Bulletin.

A briefing note in response to follow up questions has been circulated to all Members of this committee and face to face briefings on the findings of the study and work to date have been offered later in March 2023.

Officers have been reviewing the information from the study and have begun to develop a workplan around key themes from the Study including data, definitions, delivering accessible homes as well as, allocations, adaptations and advice and information.

A provisional date for the first Working Group has been set for 30 March 2023. The Working Group will be a high-level steering group tasked with agreeing priorities and ensuring relevant internal teams, external stakeholders and people with lived experience are engaged in progressing work. An update on agreed priorities and timescales will be provided in June's Business Bulletin.

Contact:

[Gillian Donohoe](#), Senior Housing Development Officer

Coillesdene House – Lift performance issues

Coillesdene House is a multi storey block in the Portobello/Craigmillar ward in the North East area of the city with 41 flats, 34 of which are privately owned with seven owned by the Council.

The Council provides a factoring service at this block and as part of this service, provides a repairs and maintenance service for the lifts.

Since December 2022 there have been intermittent issues with the lifts which have impacted on the residents and visitors to the block. All breakdowns and faults have been reported to the contractor who has carried out multiple repairs. However, due to the age of the lifts, the repairs can be complex and it can be

Contact:

[Sarah Burns](#), Head of Housing Operations

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difficult to obtain parts. This has resulted in delays to some repairs being completed.

Most of the repairs are covered as part of the contract but some, including any repairs as a result of vandalism, are recharged to the Council and the private owners.

The issue of lift maintenance was discussed at the Council meeting on 9 February 2023. Prior to this, officers had been in contact with the Coillesdene House Residents Association and the residents on a number of occasions since January 2023. Letters were sent to all residents on 9 January 2023 and on 20 February 2023 and a meeting was held with the Coillesdene House Residents Association on 8 February 2022. A further meeting has been arranged to take place on 8 March 2023 to which all residents and owners have been invited where the options for the longer term plan for the lifts will be discussed.

In light of the recent performance of the lifts, officers will recommend that a survey should be carried out to explore options for the on-going maintenance of the lifts, including the potential to replace the lifts. As the Council is a minority owner in the block, this would need to be agreed with the owners before a survey and any subsequent works could be progressed.

Following the Council meeting on 9 February 2023, officers are currently drafting a report on lift performance and investment on all lifts across the city's multi storey blocks will be brought forward to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on 9 May 2023.

Additional Funding for new affordable homes

Edinburgh has secured an almost 20% increase in grant funding from Scottish Government for the affordable housing supply programme in 2023/24. The Council has been able to secure an additional £8 million on top of the original Resource Planning Assumptions of £45.2million from national underspends. The new budget of £53.2million in 2023/24 continues to support the Council and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to construct around 2,000 affordable homes on 35 sites across the

Contact:

[Elaine Scott](#), Head of Housing Strategy and Development

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city. The programme also supports off the shelf purchase of homes for social rent.

The 2022/23 Affordable Housing Supply Programme budget has contributed to a variety of innovative projects across the city, including the acquisition of the Liberton Hospital site, development of 300 affordable homes at West Craigs with completions expected in 2024/25 and purchase of 23 homes for social rent from the Ministry of Defence at Dreghorn.

UK Levelling Up Fund update

In June 2022 Committee approved proposals for two projects to be submitted by the Council as part of the second annual round of UK Levelling Up Fund calls for bids. These projects included an application for funding to support the regeneration of Inch Park alongside a City Wide Cultural Regeneration project.

Bids were submitted in August 2022. In January 2023 the Council were notified that they had been unsuccessful in their bids from the UK Levelling Up Fund. The notification advised that the UK Government would provide unsuccessful projects with individual feedback on their submissions, but no feedback has been made available to the projects as yet.

In total, the Council has now made five submissions to the first two UK Levelling Up Fund bidding rounds. Of these, one project – Granton Gasholder – was successful in securing £16m of UK Government investment.

UK Government plans for future rounds of UK Levelling Up Fund bids– including likely timetables or guidance for potential bidders - have yet to be announced. Further reports including proposals for future bidding rounds, and feedback received on previous rounds, will be brought to Committee when further information is available.

Contact:

[Chris Adams](#), Strategy Manager