

## ANGUS COUNCIL

## NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE – 15 JANUARY 2009

## REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

## SUPPORTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

<b>Abstract:</b> This report seeks Members' approval to release early action development sites to support the building industry in line with Members' commitment to action established at the November Neighbourhood Services Committee.
--

**1. RECOMMENDATION**

## 1.1 It is recommended that Members:

- i. Agree that the sites set out in the report be developed through partnership with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs);
- ii. Agree that these sites are only released on the condition that the existing buildings are demolished and sprinkler systems are installed in all replacement properties;
- iii. Agree that these sites are put forward by Angus Council as priority projects for accelerated capital funding as part of the COSLA/Scottish Government £100 m accelerated affordable housing investment programme;
- iv. Agree the outline design principles set out in the report;
- v. Note that this report provides tangible evidence of how Angus Council is taking a policy led approach to respond to the current challenges being faced by the development industry;
- vi. Agree that further opportunities for accelerated capital spend should be identified for Members' approval.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Members approved Report 500/08 setting out their commitment to Angus Council developing new houses at Monifieth and Kirriemuir and investigating the possibility of the Council developing additional sites (Members are updated on progress on these sites in this cycle in a separate report). Report 1082/08 updated Members on progress with Council owned sites identified in Report 500/08 and noted their commitment to developing these sites. Members have also considered the unique circumstances impacting on the world economy and development industry at the present time. Reports No. 966/08 and 1088/08 set out the background for the building and development industry for Members within the current economic market. These reports have made Members aware of the significant downturn in the UK's house building industry and the fears of significant financial pressure on new and current mortgage holders. Report 1088/08 which was approved in November 2008 set out ways in which Angus Council believes it can assist the development industry. This report builds on Members commitments agreed in Reports 500/08 and 1088/08.

**3. PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 Given the current economic climate and the joint COSLA/Scottish Government desire to bring forward capital projects, and, to demonstrate real commitment to taking actions that support the development industry, it is proposed that the Council releases three of its early action sites in Arbroath (Harry Farmer Court, to include the existing lock up sites), Forfar (Newmonthill) and Kirriemuir (Marywell Gardens) to be developed in partnership with Registered Social Landlords. It is also proposed that the three sites are put forward by Angus Council to the Scottish Government for the third round of funding from the COSLA/Scottish Government £100m Accelerated Affordable Housing Investment Programme (AHIP) as priority projects for Angus.

3.2 Members are asked to note that RSLs and the Scottish Government have recently raised the possibility of these sites being released given the need for accelerated projects and the Council has also been approached by a number of speculative private developers seeking to develop these sites. It is proposed that Members agree to release these sites to RSLs as this route will not only provide work for developers but also attract additional government grant whilst meeting the needs of those seeking affordable housing for rent. Further details on the selection of a preferred partner will be brought to the Committee for discussion and approval.

3.3 It is further proposed that a design and planning brief is drawn up to assist the development process. The development principles will include:

- Demolition of Newmonthill and Marywell Gardens
- Family housing is prioritised at Marywell Gardens and Harry Farmer Court
- Newmonthill is prioritised for housing for varying needs clients
- All sites are to be designed and built in accordance with SHIP (Strategic Housing Investment Plan) principles
- Sprinkler systems are to be fitted in all new properties
- All properties are to be available for rent
- Properties are to be let through a special letting initiative (details to follow)

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no direct financial implications for the Council arising from the recommendations in this report.

4.2 Further reports setting out the full financial implications and implications for other areas of Housing, will however be presented for members' future consideration as the proposed selection of a preferred partner develops.

#### **5. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

#### **6. SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT**

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Single Outcome Agreement for Angus.

Outcome10:- We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need:-

- Good quality housing is available throughout Angus;
- Crisis response for homeless households is provided.

#### **7. CONSULTATION**

7.1 The Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Services, Director of Social Work and Health, Director of Infrastructure, the Head of Finance and the Head of Law and Administration and Head of Planning have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

#### **8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The issues dealt within this report have been the subject of consideration from the equalities perspective (as required by the legislation). An equalities impact assessment is not required.

#### **9. CONCLUSION**

9.1 This report sets out a real example of how Angus Council is committed to responding to the global and local pressures facing the development industry and those seeking affordable housing for rent. If Members approve this report they will be providing accelerated capital projects whilst supporting their commitment to maintaining their desire to protect the design standards of the built environment, subject to planning approval.

**RON ASHTON**

## **DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

**NOTE:** Report 500/08, COUNCIL LED DELIVERY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING and Report, 966/08, POLICY DEVELOPMENTS SUPPORTING THE HOUSE BUILDING INDUSTRY AND HOMEOWNERS IN MORTGAGE DIFFICULTIES, and Report 1088/08 SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES – SUPPORTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING, Report 1082/08, HOUSING CAPITAL AND PLANNED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME - HRA BLOCK – 2008/2009 as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) have been used in preparing the above Report.

**Hsg/NS/AMcK**