

ANGUS COUNCIL

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE – 16 April 2009

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

COUNCIL SITES FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Abstract: It is recommended that the Committee approve that the Director of Neighbourhood Services enters into formal discussions with the Housing Associations and on the production of plans acceptable to the Council seeks Minister's approval to dispose of the sites at nominal value to reinforce the Council's commitment to developing affordable housing in Angus and its commitment to partnership working.

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- i. Note that Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) partners have developed a positive partnering approach following the request made by Committee;
- ii. Agree that the Director of Neighbourhood Service enters into formal discussions with the Registered Social Landlords;
- iii. Agree that further details on the proposals are brought to Committee for discussion and approval; and
- iv. On the production of plans acceptable to the Council, and capable of securing the support of the development standards committee, the Director of Neighbourhood Services seeks Minister's approval to dispose of the sites at nominal value.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Report 27/09 set out the Council's commitment to affordable housing and to working in partnership with registered social landlords (RSLs) through the release of three key, Council owned, sites for potential development via RSLs (Marywell Gardens, Newmonthill and Harry Farmer Court).
- 2.2 At a meeting of all the RSLs operational in Angus, the release of the sites was discussed with the Council's preference for a consortium approach being highlighted as well as for the subsequent developments having innovative features such as sprinkler systems and in particular that Marywell Gardens and Newmonthill are demolished.
- 2.3 The RSLs have now written to the Council expressing their willingness to develop a consortium approach between Angus Housing Association, Hillcrest Housing Association and Servite Housing Association, all of who are current active developers in the Angus Area.
- 2.4 Members are asked to note that Angus Council has a positive track record in releasing sites for RSL developments where this is a timely and prudent route through which to secure affordable housing for rent and for sale which has, over the past several years, enabled additional investment to be levered into the Angus area and this proposal seeks to build on that experience.
- 2.5 Members are further asked to note that this is the first Council led consortium approach undertaken and meets The spirit of the Scottish Government's direction of travel on gaining efficiencies through collaborative working within the RSL sector but also between Council's and RSL partners.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 The next steps in this process are to enter into discussions with the RSLs progress their proposals to the design stage ensuring the innovative design solutions sought by the Council are delivered through this process. Committee are also asked to note that the Director of Neighbourhood Services will raise the development of these sites with the Director of Social Work and Health in the context of the recently published best value review of older people's

services and where appropriate other care groups to ascertain if there is potential for this development to contribute to the goals of the best value review and the needs of other care groups. The Director of Neighbourhood Services will also be seeking to explore to potential of ethical procurement to be harnessed to reduce the carbon footprint of the entire development process – and not just the houses themselves - whilst ensuring local businesses are given the opportunity to participate on the development process.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report at this time.

5. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no human rights implications associated with this report.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 The Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate Services, the Head of Finance and the Head of Law and Administration have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 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.

8. SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

8.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the single Outcome Agreement for Angus:-

- Good quality housing is available to all in communities throughout Angus.
- Good quality housing is available throughout Angus.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 Angus Council have taken a range of steps to support the development industry and is keen to continue to develop innovative approaches to the commissioning as well as procuring of affordable housing. It is pleasing to note that the RSL sector shares the Council's commitment to collaborative development and whilst this report relates to three specific sites, it is hoped that the approach will have the potential to be replicated in the future.

**RON ASHTON
DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above Report.

Hsg/NS/AMcK