AGENDA ITEM NO
REPORT NO 142/11

ANGUS COUNCIL

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE – 24 FEBRUARY 2011

ANGUS STRATEGIC HOUSING INVESTMENT PLAN 2011

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

ABSTRACT: This report details the preparation of the Angus Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2011, and its submission to Scottish Government for assessment. The approval of Members is sought for the on-going development of the Investment Plan during 2011.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-

(i) Approves the Angus Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2011; and

(ii) Agrees to the on-going development of the Investment Plan and its associated procedures in conjunction with the Council’s partners during 2011.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 During 2007, Communities Scotland, the erstwhile national housing and regeneration agency, introduced a requirement for all Scottish local authorities to prepare a Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) for their area. This requirement upon local authorities to develop a SHIP is linked to the implementation of the Strategic Housing Investment Framework by the Scottish Government, which is intended to provide a more transparent and structured approach to investment in affordable housing and regeneration.

2.2 The first Angus SHIP, covering 2008, was submitted to Communities Scotland in November 2007. The 2009 SHIP was developed during 2008, and took into account the updated guidance issued by Scottish Government, and the results of the assessment of the first Angus SHIP. Again, a formal assessment was undertaken by Scottish Government, and several areas for improvement identified.

2.3 Following the issue of further revised guidance by the Scottish Government during 2009, the Angus SHIP 2010 was prepared and submitted to Scottish Government at the end of November 2009. Once again, a formal review was conducted by the Scottish Government, and areas for improvement were suggested.

2.4 The Scottish Government issued updated guidance on the preparation of Strategic Housing Investment Plans during October 2010, retaining the links made previously to the Housing Need & Demand Assessment and Local Housing Strategy processes, whilst also seeking to take into account current challenges facing the housing sector. A series of templates which local authorities are required to complete remain at the centre of the guidance, covering unit numbers, timescales and estimated costs, etc, for each project identified.

2.5 Preparation of the Angus SHIP 2011 began in August 2010, and has been a partnership process wherever possible, to reflect the status of the SHIP as a key corporate document. A range of internal and external partners were given the opportunity to input to the preparation of the 2011 SHIP, and significant input has been received from the Council’s Planning & Transport Division, Housing Association’s and house-builders.

3. CURRENT POSITION

3.1 The Angus SHIP 2011 has been submitted to the Scottish Government for consideration. A copy has also been placed in the Member’s Lounge.

3.2 The Angus SHIP 2011 sets out the Council’s immediate priorities for investment in affordable housing, as well as highlighting additional opportunities for investment in the delivery of new
affordable housing in Angus over the period to 2015/16. The Council’s vision for continuing investment in the delivery of high quality affordable housing remains a key part of the Angus SHIP 2011.

3.3 The Angus SHIP 2011 endeavours to set realistic targets for the delivery of new affordable housing in Angus during 2011/12 and subsequent years. However, the lack of information available from the Scottish Government in relation to funding allocation and funding allocation processes in 2011/12 and subsequent years has not made this a straightforward task.

4. NEXT STEPS

4.1 The Angus SHIP 2011 prioritises delivery of 14 units of affordable housing on two sites in South Angus, 20 units of affordable housing on three sites in West Angus and 25 units of affordable housing on a single site in North Angus. However, it now appears that the allocation of Scottish Government funding to individual development projects in 2011/12 will be via a national bidding process rather than from allocations to local authority areas. This means it is difficult to predict at this stage how many of the above projects will receive funding. We are also awaiting formal confirmation from Scottish Government of the availability of funding to cover the outstanding costs of development projects commenced during 2010/11.

4.2 Further work is also required during 2011 in relation to several aspects of the SHIP process in Angus. These include further enhancing the efficiency of the delivery of new affordable housing and the development of a policy approach which will maximise the value of commuted payments received by the Council in lieu of on-site affordable housing contributions within residential developments.

4.3 During 2011 the Council and its partners will also be exploring new and innovative options for funding and delivery of affordable housing, which will link-in to the SHIP process in Angus.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct financial implications for the Council arising from the recommendations of this report.

5.2 The costs attached to the preparation of the 2011 SHIP were met from existing resources. As noted above however, information is awaited as to the level of funding that Angus Council will receive from the Scottish Government and therefore when resource implications for the Council are identified in relation to the implementation of the 2011 SHIP, suitable reports will be prepared and presented for the consideration of Members.

6. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct human rights implications arising from the contents of this report.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The issues dealt with in this report have been the subject of consideration from an equalities perspective. An equalities impact assessment has been undertaken.

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.
- Resources are used effectively.

9. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (SEA)

9.1 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 applies SEA to the Angus SHIP 2011. The process requires consideration of whether the Angus SHIP 2011 is likely to have no or minimal environmental effect (called "pre-screening") or is unlikely to have significant environmental effect (called "screening"). The latter requires prior consultation with the Scottish Government's "SEA Gateway" (SEPA, SNH and Historic Scotland). I seek
authorisation to carry out all the required steps under SEA for the Angus SHIP 2011 up to the point of its adoption by the Council to ensure compliance with the requirements of the 2005 Act.

9.2 On consideration of the Angus SHIP 2011, I have concluded that this Investment Programme is likely to have no or minimal environmental effect and have notified the SEA Gateway accordingly, as required by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. This notification will be published by the Gateway on the Public Register maintained to that end.

10. CONSULTATION

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

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 The Angus SHIP 2011 restates the Council’s commitment to provide high-quality affordable housing to meet the needs of the people of Angus, both now and in the future. By approving this report, Members will signal their approval for work to continue on ensuring that the Council’s commitments to affordable housing are successfully delivered, through the SHIP and LHS processes in Angus.

RON ASHTON
DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

NOTE: The background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report are:

- Report 18/10 – Angus Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2010.

Hsg/NS/AMcK/KS