

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Executive Director of Housing Environmental and Economic Development

Tendering Committee: 7 September 2010

**Subject: Tender for the Services of an Independent Tenant Adviser during
the Council's partial stock transfer**

1. Purpose

- 1.1** This report seeks Committee approval to issue a tender for the Services of qualified and experienced consultants to act as Independent Tenant Adviser to tenants included in the Council's partial stock transfer project.

2. Background

- 2.1** At its meeting on 5 May 2010, HEED Committee approved the Partial Housing Stock Transfer strategy, which proposes the transfer of around 5,080 properties to a locally based Housing Association(s) subject to an independent ballot(s) of tenants.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** Tenants play a crucial role in the transfer process. In addition to consultation throughout the transfer process, they must be given the opportunity to influence the transfer proposals. The Scottish Government cannot consent to a transfer unless the majority of tenants voting in the transfer ballot support the proposals.
- 3.2** The complexity and intensity of the stock transfer process makes it essential that tenants have access to independent advice. All tenants affected by the stock transfer proposals should be able to make an informed choice at ballot on whether they wish to remain tenants of West Dunbartonshire Council or transfer to an alternative landlord. It is recommended that independent advice be made available to them and that the Council appoints an independent consultant to act as the tenants' adviser.
- 3.3** The role of the Independent Tenant Advisor (ITA) is to provide impartial, objective information and advice on the full range of issues included in the transfer proposal(s). The ITA also plays a key role in ensuring that tenants are actively involved in the process and that their views are represented. In a partial stock transfer, the ITA's role extends to providing information and advice to retaining tenants.
- 3.4** There will be a clear working brief, agreed with tenant representatives, which sets out the responsibilities of the ITA throughout the transfer process. Tenant representatives will be involved in the selection and appointment of the ITA.

3.5 As the aggregated value of this contract will not exceed EU Procurement threshold of £156,442 it is anticipated that an Open Tender process will be used as per Contract Standing Orders requirements.

4. People Implications

4.1 There are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 It is anticipated that the commission would run to 2012, at which time transfer is planned to take place subject to a ballot of tenants. This spend would be charged against the HRA Capital costs for stock transfer.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 If the contract is not tendered the Council will not be able to comply with the requirement to provide independent advice to tenants during the course of the proposed partial stock transfer process.

7. Equalities Impact

7.1 No significant issues were identified in a screening for potential equality impact of this report.

8. Conclusions and Officers' Recommendations

8.1 A tendering exercise will provide a competitive and transparent process to engage the Services of qualified and experienced consultants to act as Independent Tenant Adviser.

8.2 The Committee is invited to approve the initiation of an Open tendering procedure by West Dunbartonshire Council.

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Executive Director of Housing Environmental & Economic Development

Date: 7 September 2010

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Appendices: None

Background Papers: None

Ward Affected:

All