

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee: 6 October 2010

Subject: West Dunbartonshire Common Housing Register 'HomeSearch'

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update on progress in the development of the Common Housing Register (CHR) in partnership with local Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

2. Background

- 2.1** At Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee on 2 September 2009, it was agreed that progress on the development of the CHR would be a standing agenda item for future Committees. Concerns have previously been expressed about the pace of progress, particularly in relation to the ICT issues.
- 2.2** Representatives from the Council and the RSLs are continuing to meet on a monthly basis. Sub groups have been established to take forward particular tasks.
- 2.3** The project has been scoped and defined in agreement with the partners and the Project Definition Form was presented to the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee on 3 March 2010.
- 2.4** The apportionment of cost for the CHR has been agreed in principle with partners on the basis of the number of rented stock owned by each partner. The breakdown of cost apportionment across the partners was included within the Project Definition Form.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** At the meeting of the Project Board on 27 May 2010, the partners agreed to form an additional sub group to prepare a specification that would be used to tender for an ICT solution.
- 3.2** The ICT sub group provided a progress report at the Project Board meeting on 29 July 2010.
- 3.3** They advised that they have identified 20 key elements they consider essential for the operation of the CHR.

- 3.4** The sub group have also identified a number of 'highly desirable' elements. However, as the group believes that any system offering the essential key elements would be sufficient to operate the CHR, these desirable elements are being kept separate at the present time.
- 3.5** Discussions have taken place with the Council's ICT section and they have agreed to project manage the procurement and implementation of the CHR solution.
- 3.6** They have prepared a standard tender document which includes the agreed specification of requirements and the scoring matrix.
- 3.7** A small Project team which includes representatives from the Council and three partner RSLs - Clydebank, Bellsmyre and Faifley - has been established. This team will take forward the system procurement and development process.
- 3.8** ICT will use Prince methodology to manage the project. They will create a separate Project Initiation Document (PID) which will incorporate the following information:
- The business problem;
 - The project objectives;
 - The scope of the project;
 - The names of the Project Sponsor and Board;
 - The name of the Project Manager;
 - The names of the members of the project team; and
 - The issues/risks.
- 3.9** ICT will prepare a project plan with agreed tasks and timescales. Monthly reports on progress, issues and risks will be provided.
- 3.10** The Council will be responsible for on going ICT support following the installation of the system.
- 3.11** On 7 September 2010, Tendering Committee agreed to the tender being issued. There will be 52 days for interested parties to return.
- 3.12** The Project Board has agreed that in addition to the existing means of advertising, the tender should be advertised in the well known housing journals - Inside Housing and Housing News.

4. People Implications

- 4.1** A dedicated staff resource has been in place since 1 September, 2010. This will ensure that all aspects of the project are progressed within the agreed timescales.
- 4.2** Additional support is being provided by Dunbritton Housing Association.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** Funding will be required to develop a shared ICT system. An indicative cost of £100,000 has been included within the scoping of the project. This is based on the costs incurred by other Local Authority areas who have implemented a CHR. The likely costs for the West Dunbartonshire CHR will be reported to a future Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee, once the scoping of the ICT solution is complete and resourcing and training needs to take the project forward are identified.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1** Progress in relation to establishing a CHR for West Dunbartonshire is important in developing cohesive services for the communities of West Dunbartonshire to facilitate improvements in accessibility to housing across the area. Beyond this, given the Council's commitment to transfer a proportion of its housing stock as determined in the Standard Delivery Plan, the creation of a CHR will be an important component of supporting access and will aid minimising the risk of fragmented services in the future.
- 6.2** Securing the creation of the CHR has been identified as a key element in the drive for continuous improvement in housing services. Maintaining the momentum in achieving a successful outcome on this project is therefore critical.

7. Equalities Impact

- 7.1** An impact assessment is not required at this stage but will be required as the project develops.

8. Conclusions and Recommendations

- 8.1** The development of a comprehensive CHR facilitates ease of access to all social rented housing within the area.
- 8.2** It is recommended that the Committee note:
- (i) the progress to date in the development of the CHR; and
 - (ii) that a further report will be brought forward setting out the timescale for implementing the preferred ICT option once the tender has been agreed by the tendering committee.

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Date: 6 October 2010

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Appendix: None

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All