

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services

Community Ownership Programme/Housing Stock Transfer Committee:

7 June 2006

Subject: Community Ownership Programme

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval to submit the following documents to Communities Scotland as the Council's application to join the Community Ownership Programme:-

- a) Standard Delivery Plan
- b) Community Ownership Programme Gateway 1 Application
- c) Early Action Fund Bid

2. Background

- 2.1** In February 2004, the Scottish Executive introduced the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and requested all Councils to produce a Standard Delivery Plan to demonstrate how they will meet this standard for all their housing stock by the year 2015.
- 2.2** As part of the Standard Delivery Plan process, West Dunbartonshire Council employed consultants to undertake a stock condition survey and also to carry out an appraisal of the options available to meet the standard including full stock retention, partial stock transfer and full stock transfer.
- 2.3** The consultants concluded that full stock retention was not a viable option and recommended that West Dunbartonshire Council consider the option of either partial or full stock transfer. The Council agreed, at its meeting on 21 December 2005, to apply to the Scottish Executive's Community Ownership Programme for the partial transfer of 41% of its housing stock.

3. Main Issues

3.1 Standard Delivery Plan

The Council is required to submit a Standard Delivery Plan which:-

- a) demonstrates how many properties currently meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard and how many fail or are likely to fail within the next 10 years.

- b) sets out a programme of improvements which will bring the retained stock above the standard by 2015 and ensure that it is maintained at that level thereafter.
- c) determines the level of investment required to carry out the improvements and how this will be funded.
- d) recommends an action plan for the delivery and monitoring of the standard.

3.1.1 Communities Scotland will examine the contents of this document to ensure that West Dunbartonshire Council can afford to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard for all its retained stock.

3.2 Community Ownership Programme Gateway 1 Application

The Gateway 1 Application is the Council's application to join the first stage of the Community Ownership Programme. There are four (4) Gateway stages to the programme. Gateway 1 considers the Council's financial position before proceeding to Gateways 2, 3 and 4. The Gateway 1 Application includes:-

- a) a brief summary of the work carried out to date
- b) a statement of intent to transfer and proof of the Council's agreement to transfer
- c) information about the Council's ability to deliver the transfer and undertake tenant consultation

3.3 Early Action Fund Bid

Councils applying to the Community Ownership Programme have the opportunity to apply for a share of £175m from the regeneration grant known as Early Action Funding (EAF). The EAF is expected to capture the early benefits of transfer and can be used to fund housing activity which is directly linked to the transfer and to ensure that the investment contributes a step change in the regeneration of that area. It can be used for a range of housing related activities, including:-

- a) Demolitions
- b) New build
- c) Environmental improvements
- d) Support to meet pre-transfer owner occupier costs linked to demolition

- 3.3.1** The Council's bid is for £20m of Early Action Funding to facilitate 796 demolitions, 226 lock up demolitions, 143 new build houses, master planning and environmental work in the proposed transfer areas. The funding, if awarded, will be available over a 5 year period from 2006 to 2011.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1** Acceptance onto the Community Ownership Programme will provide scope for the Council to receive transfer support costs and Early Action Funding from Communities Scotland to facilitate the stock transfer process.

5. Personnel Issues

- 5.1** The Gateway 1 Application proposes that the Council will formulate a Community Ownership team of 5 staff to take forward the stock transfer proposals and the EAF funding allocation. This dedicated team will be funded from support costs allocated through the Community Ownership Programme and be assisted by ad-hoc support staff and consultants where required.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1** The documents listed in 1.1 and attached as appendices to this report are the information which will determine the Council's successful application onto the Community Ownership Programme.

7. Recommendation

7.1 The Committee is invited to:-

- a) approve the Standard Delivery Plan, Community Ownership Programme Gateway 1 Application and Early Action Fund Bid documents; and**
- b) agree to the documents being submitted to Communities Scotland as the Council's formal application to the Community Ownership Programme.**

David McMillan
Director of Housing, Regeneration and Environmental Services
Date: 15 May 2006

Wards Affected:	All
Appendix:	<p>Appendix 1 - Standard Delivery Plan</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Community Ownership Gateway 1 Application</p> <p>Appendix 3 - Early Action Fund Bid</p>
Background Papers:	Council 21 December 2005: Community Ownership Programme-Housing Business Plan and Options Study
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