

## **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CABINET – 17 NOVEMBER 2010**

### **NEW BUILD COUNCIL HOUSING AT MACDONALD DRIVE KILMARNOCK**

#### **Report by Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval to designate the ten properties in the first phase of Council house building at MacDonald Drive, Kilmarnock as low needs supported accommodation and to approve the Letting Plan detailed in section 4 of this report for the subsequent allocation of these properties.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 On 25 June 2009, the Scottish Government approved the first phase of the Council's bid to build council housing at the site of the former St Matthew's school at MacDonald Drive. The bid specified and was approved on the basis that the ten houses to be provided would be for older and ambulant disabled people. It was further specified in the bid that the Council would develop and implement a Letting Plan specific to these properties, so as to award priority to tenants of the social rented sector. It was further anticipated that the development and implementation of such a letting initiative would, in turn, free up mainstream social housing for larger families on the waiting lists.

#### **3. CURRENT POSITION**

- 3.1 Following approval of the bid Atrium Initiatives were, in accordance with Cabinet approval, appointed by the Council to procure delivery of the project on site. Work started on site in March 2010, with a then projected completion date of February 2011. The contractor has, however, made extremely good progress and Atrium Initiatives now expect to hand over the properties to the Council in November of this year.

#### **4. PROPOSED LETTING PLAN**

- 4.1 In order to ensure compliance with the bid specification as detailed in 2.1 of this report, it is proposed that the houses be designated as low level supported accommodation and let to older and ambulant disabled people. This will accord with the Council's approved policy for the letting of supported accommodation for older people, subject to the incorporation of additional criteria to ensure prioritisation is given to those in the social rented sector. In addition, bearing in mind the anticipation that the new build and the associated letting initiative would free up mainstream accommodation for larger families, further priority will be given to those applicants currently in larger accommodation.

- 4.2 Properties which are designated low needs supported accommodation presently receive a daily visit and housing support services. Moreover, individuals also receive care packages tailored to meet their assessed needs. Emergency response is provided by the Community Alarm service.
- 4.3. Assessment of applications for supported accommodation is carried out by colleagues in Educational and Social Services and this, in turn, informs the selection process which is carried out jointly with Housing.
- 4.4 It is proposed therefore that the Letting Plan will:
- require an assessment of applicant needs in accordance with the selection process for supported accommodation for older people
  - accord priority to applicants who are currently in social rented housing based on the existing selection process which provides for initial selection from applicants in the 60 plus age group with selection thereafter being made from the 55- 60 age group
  - in the event of otherwise equally assessed applicants, accord further priority to applicants in larger accommodation
- 4.5 For the purposes of compiling a list of eligible applicants , the Transfer, Householder, Miscellaneous and Medical Groups will be trawled to identify those who are age qualified and ambulant disabled in the social rented sector, who have applied for housing of the relevant size in the New Farm Loch letting area and those who have applied for supported accommodation in adjacent letting areas.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The installation costs for community alarms will be met from agreed Telecare budgets.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 To ensure that the conditions of the funding bid are met, it is necessary to have a Letting Plan for this development. This proposal supports the objectives agreed by Council on 2005 for this strategic direction of older people services in EA. It also meets the national direction of travel in terms of reshaping of care for older people

## **7. FINANCIAL/PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Delays in allocating these properties will entail lost rental and possibly security costs. There are no personnel implications.

## **8. POLICY/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Designating these properties as supported accommodation will provide exemption from the right to buy in terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 section 61(4) (ea), as inserted by section 43(6) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.
- 8.2 There are approved arrangements in place for allocating supported accommodation. Within this framework, there is scope to adopt an approved Letting Plan to achieve the objectives of the funding bid. It is considered that this Letting Plan is compliant with the Scottish Housing Regulator's Performance Standards, which are at the core of the regulatory framework. We aim to meet Activity Standard 1.2 (Lettings):

*'We let our houses in a way that gives reasonable preference to those in greatest housing need; makes best use of available stock; maximises choice; and helps to sustain communities'.*

## **9. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 It is considered that this development contributes to the Community Planning theme of Delivering Community Regeneration and the Letting plan contributes to the theme of Improving Health and Well-being

## **10. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no Risk Management implications.

## **11. ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 The ten houses at MacDonald Drive will be the first new build additions to the Council stock since East Ayrshire was constituted in 1996. The proposal to designate these houses as supported accommodation will ensure that they remain in Council ownership for the foreseeable future.

## **12. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 12.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
- (i) designate the ten new build properties at MacDonald Drive as low needs supported accommodation;
  - (ii) approve the Letting Plan proposed at section 4 of the report;
  - (iii) otherwise note the content of the report.

**Elizabeth Morton**  
**Depute Chief Executive/Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services**

EM/CMCA/LA  
2 November 2010

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Bid submission to the Scottish Government, dated 29 May 2009.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER**

Implementation Officer: Chris McAleavey, Head of Housing

Anyone wishing further information should contact: Chris McAleavey, Head of  
Housing. Telephone 01563 574876  
or e-mail: [chris.mcaleavey@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:chris.mcaleavey@east-ayrshire.gov.uk).