

# EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

## HOUSING COMMITTEE – 8 SEPTEMBER 2004

### VOID MANAGEMENT

#### Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks authority for the demolition of a limited number of empty houses in Bellsbank and lock-ups in Cumnock which have been badly damaged and are considered beyond the cost of economic repair. The report also recommends disposal of four flatted properties in Patna as surplus to operational requirements.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Previous reports to this Committee have highlighted the lack of demand for Council housing in some parts of our communities in the south of East Ayrshire. In some cases, Members have approved demolitions and disposal of surplus stock and recently it was agreed to seek to engage market interest in developing a housing regeneration partnership initiative within the New Cumnock and Dalmellington areas. Occasionally however, individual situations arise which require to be dealt with promptly either to minimise risk or further loss. Any decision to declare stock held on the Housing Revenue Account surplus to requirements requires the approval of this Committee.

#### 3. PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The four house terraced block at 2-8 Hillcrest, Bellsbank is empty and has suffered major damage arising from vandalism. The local area Housing Manager reports that the cost of repairing the houses is likely to be high and that even when repaired, there is unlikely to be any demand for these properties from applicants on the waiting lists. In the circumstances, and to avoid risk of further damage and increased danger to adjoining householders, it is proposed to demolish the houses and re-instate the ground following demolition to improve the quality of the immediate environment. The local Member is supportive of this proposal.
- 3.2 The four-in-a-block tenement flats at 114-120 Dalharco Avenue, Patna, are empty and have been damaged by fire and attacks by vandals. Each bed-sit comprises 2 apartments (1 bedroom) but there is little or no demand for them from applicants registered on the house waiting list. It is considered that the cost of refurbishment is not justified in the circumstances but an opportunity exists for the building to be converted to provide larger sized units for which

there is a local demand. The costs of conversions have been estimated at approximately £70K but no funding is presently available to the Council to allow this work to proceed. It is therefore, proposed that the properties in question be declared surplus to requirements and advertised for sale as a development opportunity. The local Member is supportive of this proposal.

- 3.3 The four empty garage lock-ups at 9, 10, 11 and 12 The Holm, Cumnock had been attacked by vandals and were considered to be in a dangerous condition beyond economic repair. In view of the risks to public safety involved, steps have now been taken to demolish the lock-ups concerned. The local Member supported the action taken.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The cost of the proposed demolition at Bellsbank and the demolitions of the Cumnock lock-ups will be met from within Housing Investment Programme budgets.
- 4.2 Any receipt from the disposal of the properties at Patna identified as surplus and recommended for disposal will be a receipt to the Housing Revenue Capital Account

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 All properties identified within this report remain within Council ownership. In addition none of the properties identified are tenanted. There are accordingly no parties with a compensatory interest arising from a decision to demolish or convert.
- 5.2 As the properties at Patna identified as surplus and recommended for disposal are held on the Housing Revenue Account the consent of the Scottish Executive to the disposal will be required in terms of Section 12(7) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987.

#### **6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Nil

#### **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 These proposals are designed to resolve certain identified problems which represent significant risks to the Council and the residents in the immediate neighbourhoods involved. The proposal also supports the Council's objectives in improving community safety as detailed in the Community Plan and the Local Housing Strategy.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 It is recommended that Members:

- (i) Approve the proposals to demolish 2-8 Hillcrest, Bellsbank.
- (ii) Agree that the properties at 114-120 Dalharco Avenue, Patna be declared surplus to requirements and that the Executive Director of Development and Property Services be authorised to market the subjects as outlined in paragraph 3.2 above.
- (iii) Homologate the action taken to demolish the lock-ups at 9, 10, 11 and 12 The Holm, Cumnock, in view of the public safety risks involved.
- (iv) Otherwise note the content of the report.

**William Stafford**  
**Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services**

WS/CMCA/LA  
23 August 2004

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Nil

Any persons wishing further information should contact Paddy Gray, Area Manager on 01563 555445.

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