

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE - 31 JANUARY 2001

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

Report by Director of Homes and Technical Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To seek Committee approval for the provision of resources to meet, among other issues, the Development Role as articulated in the Housing Bill currently before the Scottish Parliament and the increase in local Development Activity.

2. HOUSING BILL PROPOSALS

- 2.1 The Housing Bill, currently before the Scottish Parliament, proposes major changes to public sector housing provision in Scotland across a wide range of areas. Some of these areas specifically require councils to change their development role in areas such as :-
- Strategic Local Housing Budget, replacing Scottish Homes' development programmes
 - Extension to the Improvement & Repair Grant System
 - Liaison with the new Single Regulatory Agency
 - Production of a Local Housing Strategy
 - Partnership working with all housing providers/agencies
- 2.2 Strategic Local Housing Budgets will replace Scottish Homes' development programmes, and will be prioritised and managed in accordance with the local single housing plans for the area, set within a national framework.
- 2.2.1 Types of grants to be provided and the methodology in assessing applications will be determined by the Scottish Executive so as to ensure the continuity of the appraisal system already established by Scottish Homes.
- 2.2.2 Local Authorities will have discretion to make financial assistance available for those organisations seeking to "provide, repair, maintain or manage housing and related purposes." In this way, the Local Authorities will be able to further address both homelessness and the demand for a variety of tenure types at a local level in response to identified demand.
- 2.3 The proposed extension to the Improvement and Repair Grant System to introduce a statutory test of resources for grant applications will not only assist in targeting resources to owners in bringing their properties up to the Tolerable Standard, but will also assist those who require adaptations to be made to their homes.

- 2.3.1 The proposed extension to the improvement and repair grants system will offer a simplified system to be administered by Local Authorities, targeting limited resources to the needs of local people.
- 2.4 The department will require to have in place the necessary structure to meet new needs of performance monitoring. This will entail the department in both monitoring Registered Social Landlords, within its area, and in turn being monitored by the new Single Regulatory Agency.

3. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

3.1 Local developments issues which will confront the department are:-

- Joint Strategic Agreement and Implementation Plan with Scottish Homes
- Implementation of Empty Homes Initiative
- Care & Repair Scheme
- Increase in Housing Association activity
- Response to Community Care needs

3.2 Joint Strategic Agreement and Implementation Plan, Scottish Homes

3.2.1 Within the next several months the authority will finalise its up-dated strategic agreement with Scottish Homes. This plan will cover Local Housing Systems Analysis, Joint Investment Programme in provision of new housing, Care and Repair scheme etc. The timescale for this agreement will be 2001 to 2005. It will be annually reviewed with a full up-date in 2004.

3.2.2 The above will involve the department in implementing the objectives of the agreement and will entail partnership working with other departments, Partner Organisations, External Agencies and the private sector to produce the new homes required under the various categories such as Community Care, Care & Repair, Hospital Discharge etc.

3.3 Empty Homes Initiative.

3.3.1 This work is now moving into a busy phase as work on the various properties now comes on stream. Expenditure over the next several years will amount to £623,000 from EHI alone.

3.3.2 Work will be across 4 separate sites and involve the bringing back into use 26 units of housing. Partnership working will be with Scottish Homes, Scottish Executive, Enterprise Ayrshire, Historic Scotland, Irvine Valley Regeneration Partnership, SVC Building Trust and Shire Housing Association.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 To meet the above the department will require to expand its resources within its Policy and Strategy Section.

4.2 This will be achieved by the creation of a development post within the Policy and Strategy Section of the department. The Personnel and Property Sub-Committee will be consulted upon the terms and conditions of such a post.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The anticipated costs are as follows:-

	2001/2002	2002/2003	2003/2004
Development Post & associated costs	£28,000	£28,840	£29,705

5.2 It is proposed that these costs will be met from the Housing Revenue Account and a bid for these resources has been included in the budget setting process for 2001/2002.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 That Committee authorise the Director of Homes and Technical Services to take the necessary steps to implement the proposals detailed in the conclusions above.

7.2 It is further recommended that Committee refers the staffing implication of the report to the Personnel & Property Sub Committee of the Policy & Resources Personnel Committee, subject to appropriate resources being provided in the Council budget for 2001/2002.

James Lavery
Director of Homes and Technical Services
JC/JL/WT
11 January 2001

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

(Members wishing further information on any of the above should contact Joseph Cassidy, Policy Manager, on 01563 576617)

Implementation Officer: Joseph Cassidy

AGENDA