

# **EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL**

## **HOUSING COMMITTEE – 05 NOVEMBER 2003**

### **LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY – HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2001**

#### **Report by the Director of Homes and Technical Services**

#### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform members about the proposed launch of a consultation exercise on the draft of East Ayrshire Council's Local Housing Strategy in early December 2003.
- 1.2 To provide details of the progress towards developing the Local Housing Strategy.

#### **2.0 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 makes it a requirement for the Council to make a comprehensive assessment of housing needs and conditions in its area, and to produce strategies to deal with those identified needs. The strategy is to cover all housing tenures and requires to be submitted to the Scottish Executive by April 2004.
- 2.2 A previous report to Housing Committee on 22 May 2002, detailed the approach the council proposed to take in fulfilling its requirement.

#### **3.0 PROGRESS UPDATE**

- A local Housing Information Partnership (HIP) has been established, with a broad membership of Registered Social Landlords, Health Board, Voluntary Organisations, Tenant/Residents Groups and other Council Departments, in order to harness the contribution of key local stakeholders and afford them the opportunity to influence and shape the objectives of the strategy. The Partnership has met on 26 February 2003 and 2 June 2003.
- A series of themed focus groups, involving residents and specialist staff took place during April 2003 to identify issues and recommend action to tackle the issues.
- A residents syndicate has been established to provide us with a group to consult with on housing issues.
- A questionnaire was circulated during May 2003 to gauge residents views on housing priorities. The questionnaire was circulated to all Local Offices and staff who live in the area, and over 200 completed questionnaires were returned.

- A Pan Ayrshire LHS Group has been established by East Ayrshire Council and the three Ayrshire authorities have met on three occasions throughout 2003 to share experience and discuss common issues and boundary issues.
- A Private Landlords' Forum was launched on 30 September with over 80 local landlords in attendance. It is hoped that the Forum will provide the Council with better information on this sector within the local housing market and the opportunity for the Council to influence the sector more effectively in future. Further meetings are scheduled for November 2003 and January 2004.
- Craigforth Consultants have been engaged to carry out research into the dynamics of low demand for owner occupation. This study is being conducted in partnership with Communities Scotland and North Lanarkshire Council. The study is to be completed in November 2003.
- As previously reported Market Research UK are conducting a Housing Needs Survey throughout East Ayrshire. This study and the low demand research outlined above, has been funded by the Scottish Executive grant awarded to the Council to assist in the development of the LHS and will be complete in November 2003.

#### **4.0 LAUNCHING THE CONSULTATION DRAFT**

- 4.1 It is proposed to initiate consultation on the draft LHS document with an event for all council members in early December 2003 to begin the consultation process on the Local Housing Strategy.
- 4.2 It is then proposed to roll out the consultation process across the range of key stakeholders at a series of events, as follows:
- Meeting of HIP to take place on 12 December 2003.
  - Tenants Information Service (TIS) to facilitate a meeting of the tenants Association steering group in January 2004.
  - Council Staff event in January 2004.
  - Public roadshows to take place in the North and South of the Authority during January 2004.

#### **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no policy implications at this stage of the process. The final LHS document will be submitted to members for approval following completion of the consultation exercise.

#### **6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 All costs regarding the Local Housing Strategy will be contained within the special grant the Authority has received from the Scottish Executive.

## **7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 In terms of section 89 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 the Council is required to produce a Local Housing Strategy in accordance with the guidance issued by Communities Scotland/Scottish Ministers.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Committee is asked to:

- i. Agree the consultation process as detailed in this report.
- ii. Otherwise note the contents of the report.

**James Lavery**  
**Director of Homes and Technical Services**  
**October 2003**

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**Nil**

For further information please contact Joseph Cassidy, Policy Manager on 01563 576617

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