

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE – 8 NOVEMBER 2000

REVIEW OF COUNCIL HOSTEL ACCOMMODATION – LONGPARK

Joint Report by the Director of Homes and Technical Services and the Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members of the outcome of consultations with tenants on options for the future use of Longpark Hostel.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Housing Committee of 31 May 2000 considered and agreed a series of recommendations submitted by the Directors of Homes and Technical Services and Social Work following a review of Council hostel accommodation at Longpark, Riccarton, Bonnyton and Robertland.
- 2.2 Significant progress has been achieved by Homes and Social Work staff to complete a needs analysis and develop a future service plan for sheltered housing and hostels, including new processes for joint assessment and allocations. A detailed report on these matters will be submitted to the next meeting.
- 2.3 With regard to Longpark Hostel, both Directors were authorised to discuss options for the future use of the hostel with the existing tenants and other interests. In addition the Director of Homes and Technical Services was authorised to cease allocations of tenancies within the hostel until completion of the consultation exercise.

3. LONGPARK HOSTEL

- 3.1 Longpark Hostel is a two-storey building comprising 16 bedsit flats. Each bedsit has a private kitchen and toilet, although bathing and laundry facilities are communal.
- 3.2 At present only 7 of the bedsits are occupied. As previously reported, 3 of the tenants are older people over pensionable age. The remainder are single males in their fifties.

4. FUTURE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The hostel building in its present form is clearly unsuitable for continued use either as care accommodation or mainstream housing. Social Work has confirmed its view that funding for conversion/upgrading works to provide special needs or care accommodation on this site cannot be justified solely on the assessed care needs of the existing tenants. Social Work judge that those care needs which have been identified within the group can be met

irrespective of where the individual resides through a range of Council services such as community alarm, the aids and adaptations service and the home care service. Likewise, a wider needs analysis does not provide sufficient evidence to support the general case for special needs/care accommodation on this site taking account of existing provision within the Kilmarnock area.

- 4.2** Estimated costs for the refurbishment of the existing building to provide upgraded mainstream accommodation are considered to be in the region of £80-£100K. This proposal would see the 16 bedsits being replaced by 8, one bedroomed flats with private facilities throughout. However the number of empty houses within Longpark together with the ongoing demolition of surplus stock and the adjacent new build project by Cunninghame Housing Association, suggests that demand for any new flats would be minimal. There is a real risk that any refurbishment project centred on the existing building is likely to fail and result in future problems for the Council and the wider Longpark area.
- 4.3** Demolition costs, exclusive of landscaping, are estimated at £26,000. Prior to any decision on demolition being taken it may be appropriate to further consider alternative options for the future use of the hostel building and/or site including entering into preliminary discussions with an interested developer.

5. TENANT CONSULTATION

- 5.1** Existing tenants have been visited by Homes and Social Work staff to discuss the options under consideration and to determine the needs and preferences of individual householders.
- 5.2** All tenants now accept that the 'status quo' cannot continue and have agreed to consider re-housing. Alternative accommodation has been identified for most tenants, the majority within the Longpark area as requested by the tenants themselves. In some cases, housing will be provided by Cunninghame Housing Association within their new build development. In other cases Council housing will be offered.
- 5.3** Tenants would be eligible to receive Home Loss payments and disturbance allowances from the Council if required to move from their houses on a permanent basis.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1** On the basis of the information available and taking account of the views of the individual tenants involved, it is considered that refurbishment of the existing building is impractical and does not represent value for money for the Council. Tenants have indicated their willingness to move with assistance and financial support from the Council and other partners.
- 6.2** The re-housing of existing tenants and further consideration of alternative options for the future use of the hostel building and/or site including entering into preliminary discussions with an interested developer is considered to be the most appropriate course of action at this time.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** The cost of funding Home Loss payments and disturbance payments to existing Longpark Hostel tenants can be accommodated within approved Housing Revenue Account budgets. The Home Loss payment is currently set at £1,500 subject to the tenant meeting certain statutory criteria relating to residence. In terms of disturbance payment, which is intended to cover incidental removal costs, the standard amount paid by the Council is £250 in each case.
- 7.2** The cost of any future demolition can be accommodated within approved Housing Revenue Account Capital budgets.

8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** A temporary Warden is in position at Longpark to provide a caretaking role for the property. He does not live on-site and is aware of the intentions of the Council to re-house existing tenants. Due to the temporary nature of his contract there will be no redundancy costs.

9. LEGAL/POLICY IMPLICATION

- 9.1** Tenants would be legally entitled to compensation under the terms of the Land Compensation (Scotland) Act 1973 (amended), as indicated earlier in this report.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1** It is recommended that Members
- (1) agree to the re-housing of the existing Hostel residents as indicated with financial support as required under the terms of the Land Compensation (Scotland) Act 1973 (amended);
 - (2) authorises the Directors of Homes and Technical Services and Educational and Social Services to further consider alternative options for the future use of the hostel building and/or site and authorises the Director of Homes and Technical Services to enter into preliminary discussions with an interested developer and to report the outcome to a future meeting; and
 - (3) to otherwise note the report.

James Lavery
Director of Homes and Technical Services

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and
Social Services

23 October 2000
CMcA/WT

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Report to the Housing Committee of 31 May 2000 by the Directors of Homes and Technical Services and Social Work – “Review of Council Hostel Accommodation”

For further information please contact Chris McAleavey, Head of Homes on 01563 554876 and Martin Clark, Service Unit Manager on 01563 576927

Implementation Officer: Chris McAleavey, Head of Homes

AGENDA