

REPORT TO SOCIAL WORK AND HOUSING COMMITTEE - 31 MARCH 2016

PROTOCOL TO FAST TRACK THE PURCHASE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

1 Recommendations

The committee is recommended to:

- 1.1 Approve the revised Fast Track Protocol to Purchase Affordable Housing as outlined in the Appendix 1 to this report.**
- 1.2 Request a report to Full Council to recommend amendment of the List of Delegated Powers to Officers to provide the Director of Infrastructure Services, and such other appropriate officer within Infrastructure Services as determined by the said Director with the following delegated power, namely:- authority to purchase properties from the open market utilising the Fast Track Protocol to Purchase Affordable Housing for the purposes of meeting housing need by increasing the supply of affordable housing, which delegation is to be exercised following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Social Work & Housing Committee and local Ward Members.**
- 1.3 Note that the exact wording for the said delegation will include reference to the similar officer delegation already in place in respect of the need to acquire properties to meet homelessness needs across Aberdeenshire.**

2 Background / Discussion

- 2.1 Housing aims to deliver good affordable quality housing across a vast range of services including; addressing homelessness; meeting the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) by 2020; and increasing the supply of affordable housing.**
- 2.2 In order to ensure our continued commitment to achieving these aims it is necessary to review and refresh the Fast Track Protocol to Purchase Affordable Housing – Appendix 1. This 'Fast Track' system will allow the Council to compete effectively and efficiently against other potential purchasers ensuring that we can secure appropriately sized and located homes to meet housing need across Aberdeenshire. Properties may well be purchased as temporary accommodation in the first instance to help in addressing homelessness or as part of a decant strategy to assist in meeting EESH; but in essence properties will be purchased to increase the overall supply of affordable housing and let accordingly.**

- 2.3 Delegated authority is proposed to be given to the Director of Infrastructure Services, (and such other appropriate officer within Infrastructure Services as determined by him), following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Social Work and Housing Committee and local ward members, to purchase properties from the open market utilising the Fast Track Protocol **to Purchase Affordable Housing** for the purposes of increasing the supply of affordable housing.
- 2.4 It is understood that a similar officer delegation is already in place in respect of the need to acquire properties to meet homelessness needs across Aberdeenshire. Notwithstanding that delegation it is considered appropriate that both delegations are detailed together in the List of Delegated Powers to Officers. Consequently, the proposed wording for the amended delegation is:
- “To purchase properties from the open market utilising the Fast Track protocol, following consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Social Work & Housing Committee and local Ward Members, where necessary for meeting homelessness needs or increasing the Council’s supply of affordable housing.”
- 2.5 In order to achieve this, the Infrastructure Services section of the List of Delegated Powers to Officers will require to be amended. This forms part of the Council’s Scheme of Delegation and the power to amend the Scheme is reserved to Full Council. Accordingly it is proposed that the Committee recommend the appropriate changes be made by Full Council in this regard.
- 2.6 The Monitoring Officers have been consulted in the preparation of this report and are in agreement with the recommendations.

3 Equalities, Staffing and Financial Implications

- 3.1 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken for affordable housing as part of the Strategic Housing Investment Plan process as approved by Social Work and Housing Committee 6th November 2014. There are no other implications arising from this report.
- 3.2 The staffing requirements relating to this report will be met within existing resources.
- 3.3 Step 1a within the Protocol clearly requires the identification and confirmation of an appropriate budget at the beginning of the process; no properties will be progressed without an appropriate budget having been identified and secured.

Stephen Archer
Director of Infrastructure Services

PROTOCOL FOR THE FAST TRACK PURCHASE OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

	Action	By Whom	Timescale
1.	Identify requirements for accommodation (Temporary or Permanent)	Team Leader (Options and Homelessness) Housing Officer (Accommodation) Team Leader (Tenancy Services)	Ongoing
1a.	Identify and confirm budget with Housing Accountancy Team	Team Leader (Affordable Housing) Development Officer (Affordable Housing)	Ongoing
2.	Look on ASPC/ Solicitors websites to identify suitable properties	Development Officer (Affordable Housing) Housing Officer (Accommodation)	Ongoing
3.	Obtain a copy of the full Home Report documents and viewing details and send to Team Leader (Options and Homelessness), Housing Officer (Accommodation), Stock improvement and Maintenance Manager, Team Leader (Tenancy Services)	Development Officer (Affordable Housing)	Within 2 working days of identified suitable property
3a	Officers to advise Development Officer (Affordable Housing) if want to view property. Copy in all officers involved.	Team Leader (Options and Homelessness), Housing Officer (Accommodation), Stock improvement and Maintenance Manager, Team Leader (Tenancy Services)	Within 2 working days of receiving property details
4.	Team leaders/manager to arrange for property to be viewed and inspected.	Team Leader (Options and Homelessness), Housing Officer (Accommodation), Stock improvement and Maintenance Manager, Team Leader (Tenancy Services)	Within 3 working days
4a.	Following the viewing Officers to complete and pass the signed evaluation and approval form and inspection report to Development Officer. Copy in all officers involved.	Team Leader (Options and Homelessness), Housing Officer (Accommodation), Stock improvement and Maintenance Manager, Team Leader (Tenancy Services)	Within 2 working days
5	If property suitable Development Officer (Affordable Housing) to contact Property Estates:- a) to arrange for a valuation survey to be carried out, if Home Report Valuation is more than 3 months old.	Development Officer (Affordable Housing) Property Surveyor (Internal/External)	Within 1 working day Within 5 working days

	Action	By Whom	Timescale
	b) Property Surveyor to provide guidance in relation to value of potential offer. Full Structural survey only required if requested by Stock Improvement and Maintenance Manager		Within 2 working days
6	Development Officer (Affordable Housing) to ask Team Leader (Conveyancing) to note an interest in the property	Development Officer Team Leader (Conveyancing)	Within 1 working day
7	Once Valuation advice received from Property Estates, Development Officer (Affordable Housing) to seek authorisation from Director (copy in all Housing Managers and Head of Service) to make offer to purchase property	Development Officer (Affordable Housing)	Within 1 working day
8	Notify Chair, Vice Chair of Social Work & Housing Committee, Ward Members and Area Manager	Development Officer (Affordable Housing)	Within 1 working day
9	Report back any concerns from Chair, Vice Chair and Ward Members to Team Leader (Affordable Housing) to advise Housing Manager (Strategy) and Director	Development Officer (Affordable Housing)	Within 3 working days
10	Confirm with Legal to make an offer subject to electrical and gas surveys and Full Structural Survey if required	Development Officer (Affordable Housing)	Within 1 working day
11	Legal to advise Development Officer of outcome of offer	Team Leader (Conveyancing)	Within 1 working day
12.	Subject to acceptance of offer. Development Officer to advise Tech Hub to arrange for electrical and gas surveys and full structural survey if required to be carried out, also to pass on contact details for access to the property. Tech Hub to advise Development Officer of Outcome	Development Officer (Affordable Housing) Tech Hub	Within 5 working days
13.	Development officer to seek authorisation from Director if offer needs to be varied	Development Officer (Affordable Housing)	Within 1 working day
14.	Advise Team Leader Conveyancing of outcome of survey a) Confirm original offer b) Withdraw offer completely	Development Officer (Affordable Housing)	Within 1 working day

	Action	By Whom	Timescale
	c) Withdraw original offer and submit a further offer		
15.	Team Leader Conveyancing to advise final outcome of offer	Team Leader Conveyancing	Within 1 working day
16.	Development Officer to notify all Housing Managers, Head of Service, Director, Chair and Vice Chair of Social Work and Housing Committee, Ward Members, Area Manager and officers involved.	Development Officer (Affordable Housing)	Within 1 working day
17.	Advise Tech Hub of date of entry and where keys can be collected from	Development Officer (Affordable Housing)	Within 1 working day