

**Cabinet – 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2012**

**Supplementary Report – C-035a-2012/13**

**Report of the Housing Portfolio Holder**

**Council Housebuilding Programme – Appointment of Development Agent**

**Additional Recommendation:**

**That the Leader of Council considers the establishment of a new Council Housebuilding (Development Appraisal) Cabinet Committee, through a Leader's Decision in accordance with the Council's Constitution, and that the Terms of Reference and Membership be reported to a meeting of the full Council in due course.**

**Background Information**

1. The Cabinet has previously agreed a list of 58 potential development sites across the District in the Council's ownership for the Council Housebuilding Programme – mainly difficult-to-let garage sites. The appointed Development Agent will undertake detailed development and financial appraisals for each of these sites, to determine whether or not they do have development potential and are financially viable.
2. Each of these appraisals will need to be considered and signed off by the Council, which it is felt should be undertaken by members, on the advice of officers and the Development Agent. Furthermore, a decision will need to be made for each site on whether or not a planning application should be submitted, which in any event is not a decision delegated to officers.
3. One option would be for the Cabinet itself to take on this role. However, in view of the number of appraisals that will be undertaken, particularly over the next year, and the level of detail to be considered, it is felt that this would over-burden the Cabinet's Executive Work Programme. Another option would be for the Housing Portfolio Holder to consider all of the appraisals. However, the Housing Portfolio Holder does not feel that this would be the most appropriate way forward.
4. It is proposed, therefore, that the Leader of Council gives consideration to establishing a new Cabinet Committee, through a Leader's Decision, to consider all of the development and financial appraisals that come forward, with delegated authority to sign them off on behalf of the Council and to determine the sites for which detailed planning applications should be submitted.
5. The Housing Portfolio Holder is anxious that all members have an opportunity to express their views on potential Council developments in their ward, before decisions to submit planning applications are made, and it is felt that the formation of a Cabinet Committee for this purpose - that met as and when required - would provide a good forum at which ward members could express their views, which representatives of the new Development Agent could also attend to provide further information and answer any questions.