

Community Ownership – position statement

Stirling Council has investigated a number of options for the future ownership and management of its 7,000 housing stock, including:

- stock retention;
- arms length management organisation;
- partial stock transfer to community ownership; and
- whole stock transfer to community ownership.

Each of these four options were appraised to consider how they would deliver the twelve objectives set out below.

1. To secure investment in stock improvements.
2. To provide assurances about the affordability of future rent levels.
3. To deliver effective housing management services.
4. To maximise local accountability, control and decision-making.
5. To achieve best value for the Council and its tenants.
6. To secure regeneration in under performing areas.
7. To provide new homes in pressured areas.
8. To secure the transfer of development funding from Communities Scotland to the Council.
9. To demonstrate clear linkages with the Council's continuing statutory responsibilities.
10. To address social inclusion issues (e.g. homelessness, special needs, etc).
11. To protect staff's employment rights and future job opportunities.
12. To comply with Scottish Executive and Communities Scotland guidance.

The stock option appraisal recommended that whole stock transfer to community ownership would provide the Council with the best opportunity to meet these objectives.

On 11 December 2003, Stirling Council agreed to pursue whole stock transfer to community ownership subject to tenant support in a ballot. If this initiative proceeds it could provide significant benefits including:

- more resources for reinvestment in the housing stock;
- stable rent levels over the long-term;
- availability of regeneration funding from the Scottish Executive;
- tenant representation in key decisions;
- protection of tenants' rights.

The following indicative timescales have been suggested for progressing community ownership.

Key stages	Indicative timescales
1. Decision and set-up	Nov. 03 – Feb. 04
2. Project planning	Feb. 04 – May 04
3. Consultation and business plan preparation / submission	May 04 – Jan. 05
4. Business plan evaluation / revisions	Jan. 05 – Jun. 05
5. Ballot process	Jun. 05 – Oct. 05
6. Contract negotiations and transfer	Oct. 05 – Jun. 06