NOTICE OF MOTION RELATING TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING OR COMMUNITY SCHEMES

The following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor R P Kilmister has been referred to Cabinet for consideration and report back to Council for determination; such motion being in the following terms:

_That this Council resolves to assist any community with Pembrokeshire County Council or PCNPA area with detailed technical support and advice to enable them to deliver affordable housing or community schemes under Community Land Trust legislation. The costs of this assistance are to be met from affordable homes contributions made by individuals and developers._

Councillor Kilmister’s written submission in support of his Notice of Motion is attached as an Appendix.

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are local organisations set up and run by community members to develop and manage homes as well as potentially other assets important to that community, for example community enterprises, food growing or workspaces. In Wales there is no specific legislation governing or defining CLTs; in England CLTs are defined in statute as a corporate body which satisfies conditions laid out in Section 79 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.

The main aim of a CLT, in terms of housing, is to make sure that the homes developed are genuinely affordable and they often have criteria linking them to addressing local need.

The CLT movement is well established in England but not as much in Wales. A CLT relies upon community members to not only develop a scheme but also to take on the long term management and maintenance of the dwellings; getting a scheme up and running is therefore only part of the community input required.

A number of community groups have over the years made approaches to Council Officers in Planning, Housing and Community Regeneration to discuss potential schemes. Officers have provided helpful advice and signposted community members to other helpful resources to explore and develop their options further. The assistance given to communities has however been limited to advice and providing needs figures to inform debate and has not extended to practical assistance in terms of:

- Setting up a formally constituted CLT
• Setting a vision – what the community want in relation to affordable housing
• Business Planning.
• Technical advice
• Planning and design
• Fund raising
• Project delivery

It is to be recognised that the whole ethos of a CLT is that of communities getting involved and delivering themselves. To this end they rely on key members of the community to get a CLT started and maintain momentum. The reduction in community momentum is often one of the reasons that projects are not developed beyond the vision phase.

The Welsh Government currently funds the Wales Cooperative Centre to offer advice and assistance to groups thinking of setting up a CLT. The Centre has been a supportive partner to date of the St David’s Community Land Trust. The Centre is one of the organisations the Council signposts groups to as appropriate.

Whilst it would be beneficial to help community groups to develop CLTs, given the staff resources available and the budgetary position of the Authority it is not practical or sustainable to involve Officers in detail beyond the advice and provision of general information stages. Moreover to have officer over involvement undermines the principle of communities delivering themselves.

In terms of the use of Affordable Housing Contributions being used to support the development of CLTs, Cabinet has been asked to consider the approval of a framework to define appropriate spend for these contributions, which does reference the opportunity to use contributions to assist communities in taking forward specific affordable housing projects. It should be noted however, that many of the contributions collected are small and are tied into spend restrictions to defined areas.

It should also be noted that the Council’s legal department has advised that contributions cannot be used to fund the normal services provided by the local planning authority / Council that relate to the provision of Affordable Housing.

**Comments by Chief Finance Officer**

There are no financial issues arising from this report.

**Comments by Head of Legal and Committee Services / Monitoring Officer**

There are no legal issues arising from this report, advice having already been provided as detailed.

**Comments by Head of Human Resources**

There are no human resources issues arising from this report.
RECOMMENDATION

That the Notice of Motion be not adopted due to:

1) Limited officer resources to provide communities with sustainable support beyond advice, signposting and general background information.

2) A framework for the use of Affordable Housing Contributions will separately consider the appropriateness of their use to assist communities to deliver local affordable housing solutions.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:

To address a Notice of Motion referred from Council.

Background Documents: None
Supporting Submission - Notice of Motion relating to Affordable Housing or Community Schemes

That this Council resolves to assist any community within Pembrokeshire County Council or PCNPA area with detailed technical support and advice to enable them to deliver affordable housing or community schemes under Community Land Trust legislation. The costs of this assistance are to be met from affordable homes contributions made by individuals and developers.

Community Land Trusts offer a significant opportunity to improve affordable and other housing provision especially within some of our smaller villages.

Having explored this possibility Dinas Cross Community Council came to the conclusion that it was a superb idea but it would take too much time and effort from within the Community to deliver such a project. I agreed with them.

If there had been specific outside help available then I think their response would have been very different.

I think Councillor David Lloyd has even more experience as I understand he has been trying to get such a scheme underway in St David's.

Asking a Community to complete such a project is a mammoth task and as we currently have funds available from affordable housing contributions that could make a communities aspirations become a reality.

The scheme can be managed by our Housing department so money is not wasted on providing support to schemes which have no chance of success. I would suggest that they should employ outside consultants to deliver support to those schemes which are credible.

Councillor R P Kilmister