

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 27 OCTOBER 2020

APPROPRIATION OF AREAS OF LAND BETWEEN GENERAL FUND AND THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) AT EMISLAW DRIVE & NEWBIGGING DRIVE ARBROATH

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES AND DIRECTOR OF INFRASTRUCTURE

ABSTRACT

This report requests approval for areas of the parks at Emislaw Drive Park and Newbigging Drive Play Area Arbroath to be appropriated to the HRA for the delivery of affordable housing.

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Approves that the sites extending together to approximately 4,091sqm at Emislaw Drive Park and Newbigging Drive Play Area Arbroath, (both shown coloured pink, with the larger site outlined as Area 1 on the plan at **Appendix 1**), is appropriated at nil value from the General Fund to the HRA for the delivery of affordable housing.
- (ii) Approves that an area of approximately 523sqm (shown outlined as Area 2 on the plan at **Appendix 1**), is appropriated at nil value from the HRA to the General Fund to form part of Emislaw Drive Park.
- (iii) Notes that in exchange for the appropriation of land, the HRA will fund improvements to the park including provision of new play equipment, landscaping and pathways (as shown on the proposed landscaping plan at **Appendix 2**).

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN/ CORPORATE PLAN

2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan 2017-2030 and Locality Plans:

ECONOMY

- An inclusive and sustainable economy

PLACE

- Safe, secure, vibrant and sustainable communities
- An enhanced, protected and enjoyed natural and build environment

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Members will recall that Report 263/17 (Communities Committee, 15/8/17) approved the housing led regeneration of the Timmergreens area of Arbroath. Further to this, as part of the phasing for the regeneration, Report 152/19 (Developments Standards Committee, 14/5/19) approved the planning application for 38 new affordable homes. The permission included the demolition of existing blocks of flats and garages at Emislaw Drive, as well as landscaping, drainage, roads and a new playpark on land adjacent to Emislaw Drive and Newbigging Drive. Additionally Report 601/13 (Neighbourhood Services Committee, 14/11/13) identified the Newbigging Drive Play Area for disinvestment (individual items of play equipment to be removed as they become unfit for purpose or pose a Health and Safety risk).

3.2 As well as areas already owned by the HRA which previously housed the flats and lock up garages (now demolished), the 1.06HA new-build housing site also covers part of Emislaw Drive Park and Newbigging Drive Play Area which is on the General Fund. The community (tenants and residents) were consulted on the plans for the delivery of the affordable housing, and plans were amended to reflect their views. In exchange for the areas of parkland

(valued at £8000) on the General Fund being utilised for the development, an area of HRA land (valued at £1500) would be transferred to the General Fund, and improvements (valued at £205,000) are to be carried out to the park and these are being funded by the HRA as part of the project. The improvements will benefit tenants and residents alike.

4 PROPOSALS

- 4.1 The development will result in the net loss of around 3,089sqm of open space (shown outlined on the plan at **Appendix 1**). However, the Council's open space audit for Arbroath significantly exceeds the Playing Fields Association (Six Acre) standard of 2.43HA per 1000 per head population (at 4.23HA per 1000 per head population). The audit results identified the park as just 'Fair', with low scores for the diversity and quality of the facilities (play area and sports provision) and also for biodiversity. The new play area is going to increase the scoring for functionality significantly and also the tree and shrub planting, wildflower meadow and planting of heritage fruit trees will enhance the biodiversity and landscape character of the site and create new habitats (as shown on the proposed landscaping plan at **Appendix 2**).
- 4.2 In return for the appropriation of net increase land to the HRA for the new affordable housing, improvements (valued at £205,000 and funded by the HRA) would be carried out to the park, including the installation of a new playpark facility with an informal kick about area. A pedestrian and cycle route will also be provided through the park as part of an objective to improve active travel and safe routes to school around Arbroath. A new pedestrian connection to Arbirlot Road to the south of the site will be created through the development improving links to public transport.
- 4.3 In view of the improvements being funded by the HRA, It is recommended that approximately 4,091sqm area of Emslaw Drive Park and Newbigging Drive Play Area, (valued at £8000 and shown coloured pink, with the larger of the two sites outlined as area 1 on the plan at **Appendix 1**), is appropriated at nil value from the General Fund to the HRA for the delivery of affordable housing.
- 4.4 It is also recommended that approximately 523sqm area of ground on the HRA (valued at £1500 and shown outlined as area 2 on the plan at **Appendix 1**), is appropriated at nil value from the HRA to the General Fund to form part of Emslaw Drive Park, Arbroath.
- 4.5 As the value of the land in each case is under £10,000, Scottish Ministers' consent is not required for the transfer of land between the HRA and the general fund and it is below the best value threshold for the disposal of land by local authorities.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. All costs will be contained in current HRA resources.

NOTE: The background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) which were relied on to a material extent in preparing this above report are:

- Neighbourhood Services Report 601/13 – Play Area Provision in Angus
- Communities Report 263/17 - West Arbroath Regeneration
- Development Standards Report 152/19 – Planning Application – Playpark Newbigging Drive Arbroath

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Appendix 1 – Plan indicating sites and areas (extending together to approximately 4,091sqm) at Emslaw Drive Park and Newbigging Drive Play Area Arbroath, to be appropriated to the HRA for the provision of affordable housing, and area (extending to approximately 523sqm) to be appropriated to the General Fund for Emslaw Drive Park.

Appendix 2 – Proposed landscaping plan for new play area.