

Westray Housing Project Consultation Brief

Background

The island of Westray is situated approximately 18 miles North of the main island of Orkney ("The Mainland"). The current population of 588 (Census 2011) is mainly concentrated with the boundaries of Pierowall village.

Westray Development Group formed in 1998 and within 4 years became Westray Development Trust (the Trust) and subsequently registered as a Scottish Charity and Company Listed by Guarantee. Together with its wholly owned trading subsidiary, Westray Renewable Energy Ltd, the group's vision is to develop the economic, social and cultural sustainability of our community by harnessing the quality of our resources, people and island environment. The Trust has a board of between 6-15 volunteer trustees who represent a growing membership, currently standing at approx. 140.

The charitable objectives of the Trust include provisions to regenerate the community of Westray by the maintenance or improvement of the physical, social and economic infrastructure whilst also providing housing for those in necessitous circumstances. It is also a priority to address depopulation which has seen a drop of just over 1000 residents in 100 years / improved quality of life / attract young people & families to live and work on the island?

Westray is a versatile island that has a high degree of intradependence, necessitated by historically poor transportation links with The Mainland. This has left a legacy of being able to "get things done" and high levels of commercial activity. The two main industries of agriculture and aquaculture dominate the island and the success of which the community depends. Currently one of the major employers has plans to expand their business and double the workforce however, there are some concerns as to where the new employees will be recruited from and where they will live.

At the time of writing there are 9 houses for sale on the island ranging from a traditional stone built, two bedroom property that lacks insulation and heating systems, listed as offers in excess of £45,000 to a five bedroom house, currently used as a guest house, listed as offers in excess of £220,000. There is very little movement in the property market with the most recent purchase seeing a retiring couple move to the island. The Trust wishes to explore opportunities to improve housing provision on the island and thus to stimulate socio-economic growth.

A recent study, conducted in partnership with the Local Authority and Housing Association concluded that *"Although there was not a large numerical response it is clear that Westray is generally well positioned in terms of social rented housing provision, but that some local households, many of them younger people looking for their first home, would benefit from some assistance towards the development of self-build properties or off the shelf purchase in the private market.*

The Council will continue to investigate the potential for assistance with self-build projects and finance, as well as any other schemes that may be launched nationally. We will continue to work alongside The Westray Development Trust offering support and advice on any future housing related issues or developments" (Orkney Islands Council, 2015 "Westray housing needs survey") In isolation, this report is not enough to inform the Trustees of all the options and considerations that are needed in order to fully realise our stated vision.

Purpose of the Contract

To fully appreciate all aspects of the island's social and financial economy and how best to support this with a housing development agenda, the Trustees require a strategic study of:

- Knowledge of the current and future staffing needs of the major commercial operators, service providers and authorities on the island in the form of testimonials.
- An understanding of the potential to develop partnerships with the commercial operators, service & utility providers and authorities.
- Knowledge of structured housing development options, such as Rural Housing Bodies.
- Identification of the available land plots and access to services of each plot
- Knowledge of the potential capital and revenue funding opportunities to purchase land and develop housing and/or commercial units.
- An understanding of the community's expectations and attitude towards housing and housing development
- A housing valuations study, incorporating local, Orkney wide and national valuations
- The potential to link in with any of the other projects and initiatives currently being developed by the Trust.
- Knowledge of a range of available exit strategies
- Identify potential partners (such as Local Authority, Housing Association or other Registered Social Landlord) to manage the lettings/maintenance/sales, and the costs of this.

This work will identify opportunities for the Trust to participate in housing provision, and inform the Trustees with regard to next steps. This might include submitting funding applications for land/asset purchase (such as the Scottish Land Fund) and capital development (such as the forthcoming Scottish Government Rural Housing Initiative).

Key Skills

In order to gather this intelligence, the following required skills and experience will be required:

- Preparation of business plans to inform decision making and to be used in support of funding applications
- Working with community organisations involved in owning and managing domestic and commercial assets
- Working with community organisations involved in owning and developing a housing project
- Proven effective communication with volunteers in community organisations and with the wider community
- Knowledge of funding schemes and initiatives beneficial to both developer and purchaser
- Knowledge of the Community Empowerment Bill and Land Reform Act

Key Tasks

In order to present a robust business case for funding bids for land/asset purchase, and go on to develop a range of domestic and commercial properties, on Westray, the following key outputs are required. Where possible, the maximum use of local workforce/materials and use of sustainable systems/products, etc are to be considered.

- A report of the land availability, currently marketed or otherwise
- An options appraisal for each area of identified land, detailing the potential of developing a range of both domestic and commercial properties

- A report of funding opportunities for; land purchase, domestic and commercial property development and revenue costs of developing these.
- An appraisal of the current and future employment needs of the main employment providers and their attitude towards supporting a housing project.
- A comparative study of the current market values of a broad range of commercial and domestic properties on Westray, in Orkney and National
- The delivery of and a report of community engagement exercises, exploring local people's attitudes towards a housing development project
- A report, including running costs, of organisations with the ability to manage the lettings and maintenance of the domestic and commercial properties
- An exploration of emerging opportunities to link with any local and national projects, maximising the benefit of developing housing and commercial properties.
- Identification of areas of land where the potential exists to use legislation to transfer ownership, for the purposes of building development, to the community.

Management and Output

The Operations Manager of Westray Development Trust will be the principle point of contract for the commission and to whom all enquiries should be addressed.

The work is weighted more towards developing a view on the local need, therefore it is anticipated that the consultant would spend considerable time on Westray with the collation of the wider information and report writing being conducted remotely. As such Tenders should reflect the additional costs of travelling and working on a remote island.

Remuneration

This is a fixed-term contract with a specified fixed budget and is to including travel, accommodation, administration and all other aspects of delivering the study on time.

The successful candidate will be contracted on a self-employed basis and will be liable for all tax, insurance and pension contributions.

Fifty percent of the agreed budget will be paid on appointment with the remainder on receipt on approval of the final report.

Budget

The maximum budget allocated for the purposes of fulfilling this contract is £9000 and is to include all costs associated with the delivery and production of the key tasks. The work is part funded by the Westray Development Trust and The Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

Procedure for Tendering

Invitations to tender will be accepted in a written format of no more than 3 pages of A4 in either electronic or hard copy with an attached CV. A scoring matrix is attached and is based on:

- The clarity of the proposal and its proximity to our specified key tasks
- The stated capability of the organisation including relevant and recent experience
- The skills and experience of the key personnel
- Quality assurance statements and production of testimonials
- Assessment of the risks and constraints of the organisation and/or key personnel.
- The intended methodology to achieve the required outcomes

- Access to resources
- Timeline and allocation of tasks
- Price

Timeline

12 th February 2016	Invitations to Tender sent out
8 th March 2016 (Noon)	Closing Date
15 th March 2016	Initial Assessment
16 th -23 rd March 2016	Review period with tenderers
4 th April 2016	Final Assessment
5 th April 2016	Awarding of contract to successful Tenderer
6 th April 2016	Feedback VC/Skype available for unsuccessful Tenderers
8 th April 2016	VC or Skype meeting with successful Tenderer
8 th July 2016	Work to be fully completed with reports submitted