

REPORT TO: NEIGHBOURHOOD RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE –
11 JUNE 2001

REPORT ON: ARDLER NEW HOUSING PARTNERSHIP – THE VILLAGE TRUST
COMPANY

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR, NEIGHBOURHOOD RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT

REPORT NO: 370-2001

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To outline possible options for the role and functions of the proposed Ardler Village Trust Company and to seek direction over a preferred option to progress.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

2.1 considers the issues arising from this Report.

2.2 agrees to the roles, general principles under which a Village Trust Company may be formed as outlined below (see Para 6.1, sections 7 and 8, and Appendix 2).

2.3 approves the further development of proposals to progress the establishment of the Ardler Village Trust Company as per Appendix 3.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The Village Trust Company would be expected to develop a sustainable financial base after initial pump funding from the Ardler New Housing Partnership.

3.2 The principal partners of the Company will explore in-kind support and external funding opportunities as interim arrangements.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Implementation of the Ardler Village Trust Company will enhance local residents' involvement and participation in the decision-making processes of the Trust partners and the quality of life within the estate.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Council's main action plan for Equality Action will be taken into consideration in the consultation on and development of local services.

6.0 BACKGROUND

6.1 The bid document submitted by the Council to the Scottish Office in 1998 for the redevelopment and regeneration of Ardler under new housing partnership funding arrangements envisaged the establishment of a "Village Trust Company" to undertake a variety of possible roles as follows:

- to manage and co-ordinate the integration of all partnership activity in the longer term.
- to foster local economic development activity.
- to promote social inclusion.
- to support community development.
- to provide a forum for service planning and consultation over local service delivery.

- 6.2 Critically, the Ardler Village Trust Company concept was devised as an appropriate mechanism on which to build an exit strategy for the New Housing Partnership. In that sense the difficulties experienced by the Whitfield community with the withdrawal of the Scottish Office New Life for Urban Scotland Partnership may be avoided.

The Village Trust Company would provide a legacy of integrated management for the future development of the area and its residents and a sustainable forum for local democracy.

- 6.3 To date an interim working group has been established to prepare possible options for the development of such a Trust structure and to tease out issues which may require further clarification. The Interim Group set as an initial target the resolution of structures and issues by Summer 2001 to tie in with the projected date for the Housing Stock Transfer.
- 6.4 The principal community group is the Ardler New Housing Partnership Steering Group which is acting as a co-ordinating group for local community involvement in this significant development. This Group has generated a substantial increase in the level of community participation in decision making/consultation within the area and continues to grow and develop due to their adherence to "an open door approach for local people to become involved".
- 6.5 As the physical aspects of this project develop the residents are becoming more comfortable about their future in the area. The Steering Group's attention is turning towards the role that this community will play in shaping the democratic and social fabric of the new Ardler. Sanctuary Scotland Housing Association have made an active commitment to include tenants representatives in the Sanctuary Local Board. Ardler Steering Group are currently co-operating with Sanctuary over this particular development.

However, mindful of the mixed tenure composition of the new Ardler, it is important that structures are created that are accessible to all sections of the community and which provide a representative view of needs and aspirations of all residents across a wide range of local issues.

- 6.6 The Scottish Executive and the Scottish Parliament are unlikely to radically move away from the stated principles of (a) increased decentralisation of decision making, (b) the promotion of social inclusion, (c) value for money in public services and (d) an increase in more collaborative models of service provision amongst different agencies.

The medium term effect of the above would suggest that any proposed structures should embody these principles, be flexible and allow the opportunity for possible growth in functions as and when appropriate consents are agreed or limitations reduced or altered.

7.0 THE WAY FORWARD

- 7.1 Appendix 2 outlines a possible structure which can incorporate the above principles and allow further development of the concept of the Village Trust
- 7.2 The Support Services Department indicate that all relevant parties could operate under a corporate structure which would be limited by guarantee to limit individual community members' financial liability in the event of dissolution to the level of their guarantee. To obtain charitable status the proposed Village Trust Company will require to establish stand-alone trading entities which, if required, could operate services, contracts or delegated functions.
- 7.3 The Directors of Finance and Support Services have advised on the best structures to meet legislative requirement and the principal partners' interests, ie a company limited by guarantee. In this connection, the Director of Support Services has recommended that the Company engage independent legal support to avoid any conflict of interest with the New Housing Partnership principal partners.
- 7.4 Important requirements for the Company development will be to maintain participation by the community and promote local involvement in decision making and other responsibilities as the overall development takes shape and evolves (eg training of local people).

- 7.5 It is recognised that local people may need professional assistance to increase and sustain their involvement and the Partnership will seek to finance this support from current and external funding resources.

8.0 THE ISSUES

8.1 Community Participation

- 8.1.1 It is fair to say that the Ardler Steering Group and the principal partners wish to ensure that any proposed structure allows maximum opportunity for resident involvement, participation and accountability and will, therefore, view the full establishment of the Company as an evolving and developing structure.
- 8.1.2 The community has not until now enjoyed a wide variety of representative community based groups which have seen their role as accountable to the community. They naturally are apprehensive over any possibility of decision making falling into the hands of a powerful caucus of activists who may seek confrontation as opposed to collaboration.
- 8.1.3 The Steering Group also wishes to ensure that the Company concentrates fully on the needs of the local community. In order to differentiate the different roles and acknowledge the narrower focus of the Company members, it is suggested that the role of the elected member for Ardler, in any associated Company body, be non-voting and non-executive. The selection of the chair, therefore, should be independent and suitable voting clauses will be required to define a specific constituency. The level of devolved decision making and the parameters within which Council officers are authorised to operate can be addressed as the Company develops.

8.2 Officer Involvement and Representation

- 8.2.1 At present a wide variety of officers/workers, at all levels, service the operational groups within the Ardler New Housing Partnership and associated/linked initiatives (eg Social Inclusion Partnership, Neighbourhood Service Teams etc). This is necessary and helpful at this important planning and consultative stage and will continue in the short to medium term.
- 8.2.2 It is essential, however, that the local community is helped to cope with the variety of groups and number of officers involved. Partners should be encouraged to review how best they are represented, and at what level, in order that the community can be aided by (a) continuity of representation, and (b) a localising of officer representation with which the local community can have easy access to and develop relationships.

There is a danger of the Partners being over represented which may inhibit consultation, community learning and development and the involvement of new residents.

- 8.2.3 It will be necessary in the Company to plan over time to reduce the number of partner representatives to ensure the community are in the majority and gain empowerment. In the short term it is suggested that the current New Housing Partnership mechanisms ie the Co-ordination Group gradually evolve into the Village Trust Company. To enable this transition to operate smoothly it is suggested that the partner agencies prepare an agreed plan of action to ensure all parties are comfortable and in agreement with the proposed representation quota and timescales.
- 8.2.4 Appendix 3 offers a possible initial membership for the proposed Company.

8.3 Funding

- 8.3.1 The financial implications for the operation of the Company have to be further explored as an early objective of the Interim Working Group. The key partners will require to resource Company support for the initial period of the redevelopment. This will require further examination dependent on the roles and expectations for the Company.

8.4 Political

- 8.4.1 Para 8.1.3 picks up on the role of the local Councillor which requires Committee approval. (See para 8.1.3).

9.0 CONSULTATION

9.1 The Chief Executive, and the Directors of Planning & Transportation, Finance, Housing, Support Services and New Housing Partnership partners have been consulted on the contents of this Report.

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 No background papers as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above Report.

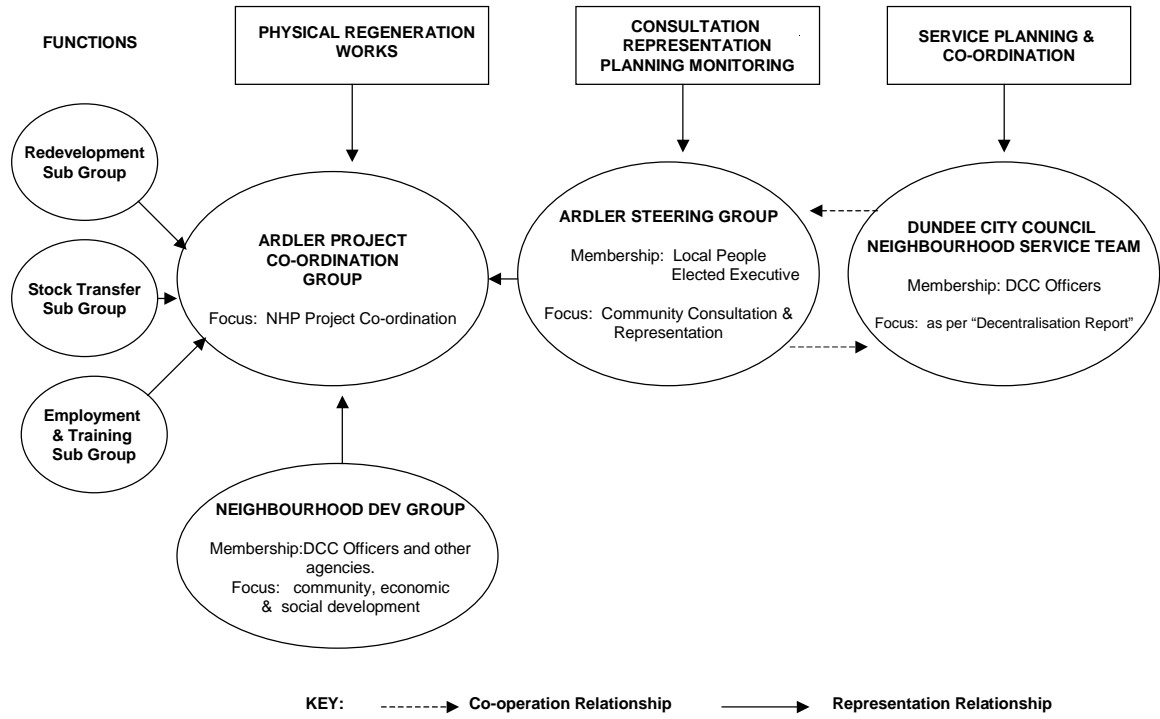
Director, Neighbourhood Resources and Development

Date

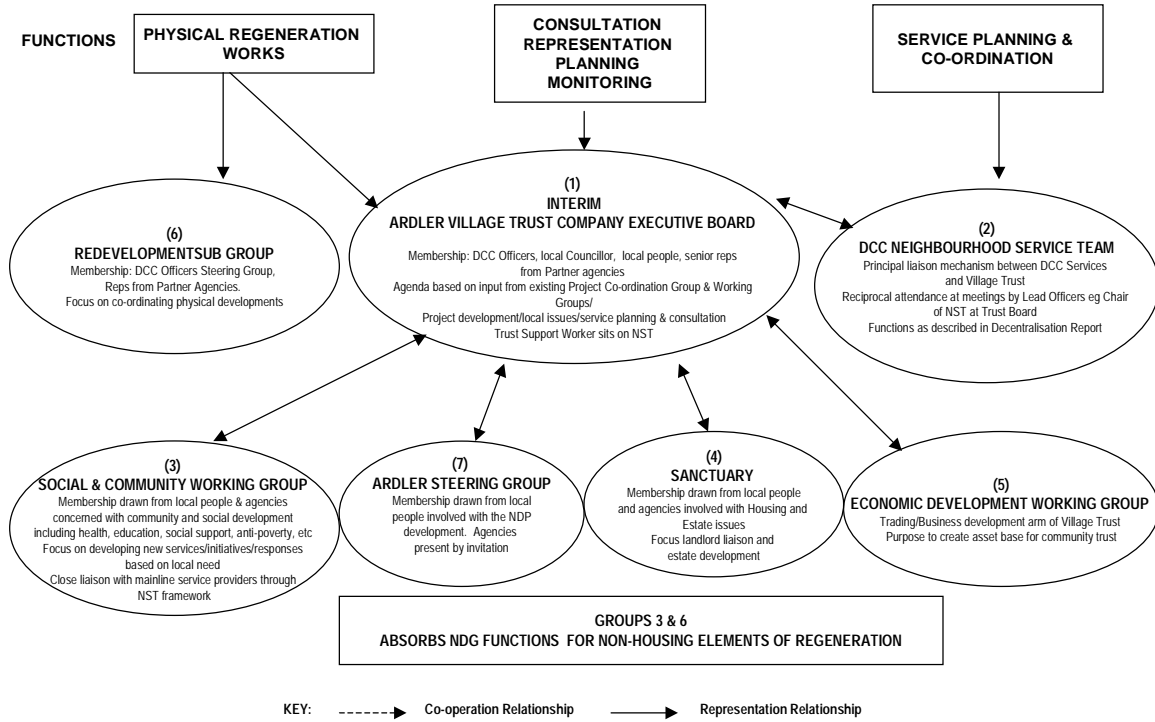
ADB/AHPH (VillageTrustPartnership)
November 2000
Amended 4 June 2001

ARDLER STRUCTURES - EXISTING AS AT APRIL 2001

APPENDIX 1
Report 370-2001



ARDLER NEW HOUSING PARTNERSHIP - THE ARDLER VILLAGE TRUST COMPANY - REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS & FUNCTIONS
-PROPOSED MODEL



ARDLER NEW HOUSING PARTNERSHIP – THE ARDLER VILLAGE TRUST COMPANY (INTERIM)

DRAFT REMIT

- Agree Articles of Association
- Approve a budget for the Company
- Facilitate community consultation
- Represent the community on working groups
- Receive reports on redevelopment progress
- Prepare a monitoring and evaluation format for the work of the Trust
- Approve a staff action plan
- Progress SIPS funding applications and initiatives
- Stimulate community development activity

MEMBERS

Sanctuary Scotland, Housing Association – representing Developers
 Dundee City Council
 Scottish Enterprise
 Scottish Homes
 Commercial Representation (Shopkeepers)
 Ardler/Chalmers Church
 Community Steering Group Reps
 Dundee Healthcare Trust/Ardler Surgery
 Tayside Police/Fire
 Further/Higher Education (Possibly Dundee College)
 Ardler Information Point Rep
 Neighbourhood Centre Management Rep

Professional Support: To be determined
 Chairperson: To be determined

Proposed
Number

2
 3
 1
 1
 1
 1
 6
 1
 2
 1
 1
 1

Over time Dundee City Council
 representation will diminish as
 Steering Group local community
 representation increases.

MEETINGS WILL BE HELD MONTHLY IN THE ARDLER COMPLEX