

Developers urged not to forget affordable housing

Housing developers are being urged to get on board with a scheme aimed at building more affordable homes in the Capital.

The National Housing Trust (NHT) scheme, being led by the Scottish Government and the Scottish Futures Trust, is looking to provide up to 1,000 affordable homes in Scotland.

The City of Edinburgh Council is leading the way among Scottish local authorities taking part; aiming to secure up to 600 of the 1,000 homes that the scheme aims to deliver.

The Council is calling on developers to join the scheme and reminding them that any homes brought forward through NHT can count towards developers' affordable housing contributions.

The procurement phase was advertised on the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) website with a deadline of 25 October for prospective developers to register an interest.

The NHT is designed to kick-start activity on mothballed building sites and create or safeguard jobs in the construction sector across Scotland.

Councillor Paul Edie, Housing Leader for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: "Many developers may not realise that the deadline is fast approaching and this scheme is a great way of getting more affordable homes built.

"This is an innovative way of tackling the shortage of affordable homes not just in Edinburgh but around the country. Everyone knows more needs to be done and it's important the public and private sector work in partnership on this project.

"Committing to this innovative scheme shows why the City of Edinburgh Council has rightly been judged as providing the

best local authority housing service in Scotland.

“Let’s give the construction industry and affordable housing market a much-needed boost.”

Housing and Communities Minister Alex Neil said: “Building more affordable homes across Scotland presents a formidable challenge in a climate of increasing financial constraint.

“The National Housing Trust model breaks new ground in the UK and I am delighted that the City of Edinburgh Council has embraced this approach as one that can help solve housing pressures in the city.

“I would urge developers to get involved in this scheme, which is expected to keep people in jobs, particularly in the construction industry.

“It will allow house builders to kick-start construction on stalled housing sites which would in many cases otherwise remain ‘mothballed’ for some time.”

Barry White, Chief Executive of the Scottish Futures Trust, said: “In these challenging economic times, NHT opens the doors to build affordable housing in Scotland. This demonstrates how the public and private sectors can work together in an imaginative way.

“Such innovation is at the heart of Scottish Futures Trust’s work to attract additional finance while ensuring value for money for the taxpayer.”

Jonathan Fair from industry body Homes for Scotland said: “The NHT is a prime example of the sort of progressive thinking that must be applied to meeting Scotland’s housing needs at a time when public spending is under tremendous pressure.

“The benefits of such an approach are significant. In addition to helping support economic recovery and maintaining a skill base, the NHT will offer housing options to a market segment

currently uncatered for – those stuck between social renting and outright home ownership.”