

West Lothian Council raises £5m from sale of new town site for housing

West Lothian Council is set to raise almost £5m from the sale of a site in Livingston for housing.

Councillors on the Executive agreed to the sale to Cruden on the land near the Toll roundabout in the north-west of the new town.

Up to 77 homes could be built on the site of which 19 would be affordable homes to let.

In a report to the Executive David Baird the Property and Estates manager said: “The council owns 7 acres (2.88 hectares) of land east of the Toll Roundabout in the Kirkton area of Livingston.

“The site is an allocated residential development site in the adopted West Lothian Local Development Plan and it has been programmed by officers from Property Services for disposal during the 2024/25 financial year as part of the council’s capital receipts programme.

“In accordance with the council’s approved Surplus Property Procedure, officers openly marketed the site during the spring of 2024 and invited offers to purchase to a closing date on 23 May 2024.

“A number of commercial offers were received at that closing date. There were no offers or expressions of interest received from the community at the closing date and no community asset

transfer requests have been received by the council for this site.

“The offers received have been fully appraised by officers and the offer received from Cruden Homes Limited (CHL) for £4.90 million is considered to represent the best terms reasonably obtainable by the council.”

The site falls within the catchment area for Peel Primary School, Howden St. Andrew’s Primary School, Inveralmond Community High School and St Margaret’s Academy. However any future development on the site would be subject to planning permission being sought and approved, and this takes into account important factors such as available school capacity.

The report added: “Subject to future planning approval being sought and agreed, CHL are proposing a development of seventy seven units, nineteen of which would be affordable housing. CHL have confirmed that if they are not able to secure planning permission for their projected seventy seven units, then they would seek to reduce their original offer on a pro-rata basis.”

A council spokesperson told the Local Democracy Reporting Service that the Council uses the proceeds from the sale of unused land to help to fund future investment in infrastructure/capital projects, such as schools, parks, roads and care services.

They added: “The sale of unused assets is therefore an important funding stream that allows the council to continue to invest in services. Without that funding, less money would be available to improve local services.”

Over £273m will be invested in maintaining and improving local services through the council’s Capital Investment programme. This does not include housing, as that is funded separately.

What Capital Investment programme spending does cover is

Property improvements – over £162m. Roads, footways, street lighting and bridges – over £60m. Open spaces, children’s play areas and sports facilities – over £27m and IT (including school infrastructure) – over £22m.

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter