

'Kit' house plans for former swimming pool site

A former swimming pool could be one of two sites used to trial new 'kit' style housing in Midlothian under plans to create more affordable homes.

Midlothian councillors are being asked to back plans to look at bringing 'modular homes' onto the sites at the former Newbattle Pool, in Newtongrange, and Rullion Road in Penicuik.

A report to councillors this week identifies the plots as unallocated land which could be used to trial the new style of housing.

Modular housing involves assembling the homes in parts off site before bringing them to the plots.

The report to elected members says the modular designs can "contribute to solving local problems: the challenge of zero carbon; failure of housing supply; the affordability crisis; poor build quality and cost of non-compliance."

It says: "As an alternative site that is more suitable for the delivery of the standard house types needed for modular construction the former swimming pool site at Main Street, Newtongrange is available.

"This will require forward funding from the Housing Revenue

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with affordability to be ascertained once a cost report is available.

“It is also proposed that Rullion Road, Penicuik as our only current uncommitted site is considered available for a modular development (circa 50 units). The date for delivery on this site is 2027/28.”

The proposals are part of work by the local authority towards finding alternative housing solutions working with off site construction firms.

The report says the council has been working with the off site construction sector to establish whether there are benefits to its housing programme in terms of efficiency, cost and quality.

It says: “Off site construction, also known as Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), allows key elements of a building to be designed, planned and constructed using pre-fabricated or pre-assembled products that are manufactured in an offsite factory environment.”

After reviewing the council’s supply of garages and lock-ups for potential sites for individual MMC homes the local authority has already identified capacity for 11 homes which can be brought forward at Eastfield Drive and Lyne Terrace, in Penicuik, where agreements for new units have been put in place.

Now councillors are being asked to support a pilot of the new modular design housing at the former swimming pool in Newtongrange as well as possible homes at Rullion Road.

The report will go before councillors for approval this week.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter