

Cairngorms Housing Partnership - Tender

Overview

The Cairngorms Housing Partnership (CHP) is seeking to employ a business or individual to drive the further development of a proposal to deliver community led housing.

We anticipate this equating to x 8 days work to be **undertaken and invoiced by the 14th March 2024.**

Background

The CHP is a business led, not for profit, company limited guarantee that was established (with the support of Highlands and Islands Enterprise) to explore and deliver solutions to improve access to affordable homes for local employees.

Work To Date

The Cairngorms Business Partnership (CBP), which led the work to establish the Housing Partnership, held a housing summit in November 2021 that brought together key stakeholders from Government, Industry, Local Authority, HIE, Community Housing Trust, Highland Housing Alliance, local community groups and CNPA to discuss a new approach to finding solutions that would enable people who want to live in, work in and care for the National Park to find a home that they can afford to rent or buy. The summit was attended by the then Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Kate Forbes and the then Cabinet Secretary with responsibility for housing Shona Robison.

At the summit the CBP presented findings of a housing needs analysis funded by Highland Council and delivered for the CBP by 56 Degree Insight. The headline summary was that there was a need for an additional 500 affordable homes for businesses to fill expected vacancies in Badenoch and Strathspey in the following 12 months.

At the Summit two projects were introduced:-

Mid Market Rent Scheme

Under this scheme it was proposed that the business community, through an organisation to be established that became the Cairngorms Housing Partnership, offer rent void guarantees to Highland Housing Alliance in return for members of the Cairngorms Housing Partnership getting priority access to those homes.

The CHP was established as a membership organisation and legal documentation was drawn up and agreed in the first half of 2022 with the pilot scheme of four homes in Aviemore advertised in Q2 2022. The CHP was capitalised with initial membership fees and from director loans and donations from the companies represented by the founding directors:-

- Mark Tate, Cairngorms Business Partnership
- Stephen White, La Taverna Restaurant
- Sally Dowden, Speyside Wildlife
- Mike Dearman, Quarch Technologies

The first four homes in Aviemore were successfully let since then a further 6 properties have been advertised under the scheme. Valid applications are allocated by HHA according to the Highland Council Housing register points system.

Community Delivered Affordable Housing

The second proposal introduced at the conference was an ambitious scheme to deliver 80 homes at least 80% of which would be affordable in perpetuity and in the control of the business or residential community. The ambition was to deliver homes across a range of tenures from seasonal worker accommodation to home ownership.

The CBP commissioned Community Housing Trust (CHT) to undertake further research particularly in relation to the proposed tenure mix and develop a proposed funding structure. This was done on a 'land agnostic' basis.

The CHT report demonstrated that the scheme was feasible albeit with funding from a range of Government portfolios and an element of external finance.

We then set out to identify land on which to develop the scheme and after meeting with Macdonald Hotels we agreed to explore taking the scheme forward within the overall development proposal for land (which is zoned for development) within Macdonald Aviemore Resort.

Initial discussions have been held with the Scottish National Investment Bank about potential funding. We have also had discussions with the Highland Council housing HUB to get the scheme listed on the Strategic Housing and Investment Plan (SHIP) and with community representatives to build support to take forward the community delivered element of the plan.

CNPA have also been kept informed and are supportive.

Current Position and Requirement

CNPA approved an outline planning application (submitted by Macdonald Hotels) that includes the community delivered scheme at the November planning committee.

We are now looking to employ a business or individual to drive this proposal forward.

To date work on behalf of CHP has been led by Mark Tate in his capacity as CEO of the Cairngorms Business Partnership. Mark Tate will leave this role in December 2023 and the CHP are now looking to directly contract with a business or individual to continue this work.

CHP is looking to commission work for a fee of around £5,000 to fund at least 8 days of dedicated support to this project.

The individual or business must have:-

- A good knowledge of the challenges faced by businesses in Badenoch and Strathspey and the broader Cairngorms National Park.
- An established network of contacts and potential partners that must include:-
 - Macdonald Aviemore Resort
 - Aviemore based community representatives
 - Communities Housing Trust
 - Highland Council
 - Cairngorms National Park Authority
 - Scottish National Investment Bank
- Ideally some knowledge of this project to date.

Project Outcomes

- Drive the work needed to secure community buy-in and stakeholder engagement
- Facilitate meetings between the stakeholders
- Build the financial models and get agreement from the numerous stakeholders
- Deliver a second Housing Summit in Q1 2024 to update and seek further support from stakeholders including Government and elected representatives

Assessment

The award will be primarily assessed based on evidenced experience based on the requirements listed above.

How to Apply

One page written submissions are required by Monday 8th January 2024 to office@visitcairngorms.com with a decision and award being made, by the board of CHP, that week.