

## DISPOSAL OF LAND FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING LANGDOWN LAWN, HYTHE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the disposal of land at Langdown Lawn, Hythe to Hampshire Voluntary Housing Society (HVHS) for the purposes of constructing affordable housing to meet local needs.
- 1.2 The proposal is to develop 11 affordable homes that would be allocated to applicants from the Council's Homesearch Register.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The site is in the freehold ownership of the District Council and is currently occupied by 1 vacant dwelling in poor condition that sits on a substantial plot.
- 2.2 Planning permission had previously been granted for the redevelopment of the site for affordable sheltered flats. However, in view of the relatively low level of need for affordable sheltered housing relative to other needs this option is not being pursued.
- 2.3 The number of households in housing need on the District's Homesearch Register is very high, standing at over 2,800 households. The provision of additional affordable housing has been identified as a priority in the *Heart of the Forest* and the *Housing Strategy*.
- 2.4 The site had been identified as a suitable site to include dwellings for supported housing in addition to general needs dwellings. This would be consistent with the Supporting People/Supported Housing Strategy. Unfortunately no revenue (Supporting People) funding is currently available to support such provision. Should members agree to dispose of the site for affordable housing the site would be developed to allow for a number of dwellings to be redesignated for supported housing if Supporting People funding becomes available in the future.

### 3. OPTIONS

- 3.1 There are a variety of options for the future of the site. These are set out below.

Disposal Option	Benefits	Costs
1. 11 Affordable Dwellings	11 units of affordable housing would be provided.  This would generate a capital receipt of £440,000. In order to fund the scheme this would need to be recycled as grant to HVHS.	There would be no residual capital receipt.

	<p>The Housing Corporation has confirmed £530,000 funding allocation to support the scheme.</p> <p>This would mean that (subject to planning) there is certainty over delivery.</p>	
<b>2. 11</b> Market Dwellings	A capital receipt in the region of £440,000 would be generated.	The opportunity to provide affordable housing on the site would be lost and £530,000 Housing Corporation grant.
<b>3.</b> Refurbish existing dwelling.	This could be done fairly quickly.	This approach would not maximise the development potential of the site. Only 1 dwelling would be provided. Costs would be incurred (born by the HRA) and these have not been budgeted for.
<b>4.</b> Do nothing	None	This approach would not maximise the development potential of the site. The property would not be fit for habitation. Ongoing costs would be incurred by the HRA.

- 3.2 Given the priority that is attached to the provision of new affordable housing the most favoured option is considered to be option 1. This will allow the development potential of the site to be maximised.

#### **4. CONSULTATIONS**

- 4.1 Several meetings have taken place with ward members and Hythe and Dibden Parish Council to discuss developing the site as part of the procedure for developing supported housing units. There were no significant objections to the proposals.
- 4.2 Responses to neighbour consultation have been mixed. There will be a further chance for them to comment at planning application stage. The main problem that has been identified by several of them is the right to access the site from Racketts Lane. HVHS have taken advice and believe they are able to access the site.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 If the Council decides to recycle all of the capital receipt to assist developing affordable housing it is able to use 100% of the receipt. The proposed recycling of the capital receipt has levered in £ 530,000 funding from the Housing Corporation. As the Housing Corporation has just allocated grant funding for this scheme there will be no need to commit additional Council resources to support the project.

## **6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The site contains a run-down dwelling and is overgrown. It is planned that the redevelopment will enhance the environment. The local planning authority will assess the impact of the development through the planning process.
- 6.2 The dwellings proposed incorporate many environmentally friendly features. Modern methods of construction would be used and energy saving features included to reduce the power consumption for tenants and water usage such as the use of recycled paper for insulation and “grey water” recycling for communal gardens. An ecological survey has been undertaken and will be taken into account in developing the site.

## **7. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 Access to appropriate housing is recognised as a factor in crime prevention. The site and building has been the subject of vandalism. Redevelopment would remove this problem.

## **8. CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 Given the priority that is attached to the provision of new affordable housing the most favoured option is considered to be the disposal of the site for affordable housing (option 1). This approach would make a valuable contribution towards meeting local housing needs and provide homes for households on the Homeseach register. It would be consistent with *Heart of the Forest* and *Housing Strategy* priorities.

## **9. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS**

- 9.1 The Housing Portfolio Holder supports the recommendations contained in this report.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 That the that land at Langdown Lawn be transferred freehold to HVHS for £440,000. The transfer being subject to planning consent being granted to HVHS to develop the site for 11 affordable dwellings; and
- 10.2 That the capital receipt (£440,000) be recycled as LASHG to facilitate the development.

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**Background Papers:**

Langdown Lawn files (contains  
some exempt information)

