



To: Executive Councillor for Housing: Councillor Kevin Price
Report by: Nicola Hillier
Relevant scrutiny committee: Housing Scrutiny Committee 21/6/2016
Wards affected: Cherry Hinton Queen Edith's

New Social Housing on Housing Revenue Account Garden and Infill Sites

Key Decision

1. Executive summary

This report provides details of additional sites to be brought forward in the Council's social housing programme, to be included in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) garage and small in-fill sites development.

The report requests approval to a capital budget for the HRA garden and back land development.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- approve the additional three sites to be developed for housing.
- note the indicative unit types and approve that they be progressed for planning approval
- approve the capital budget of £708,630 for the additional development.
- approve that delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director to enter into a legal agreement with building contractors for these sites as part of the HRA Garage and Infill Sites 2015/16 Programme.

3. Background

As the main provider of housing in Cambridge, the reasons why the Council has its own new build housing programme are as follows;

1. Provide additional social housing to meet the shortfall in Cambridge and to replace the loss of social housing through the Right to Buy.
2. Replace some of the Council's existing social housing that no longer meets current day standards and is becoming less popular with residents.
3. Build new house types that will better meet the overall mix of Affordable Housing needed in the future.
4. Improve the energy efficiency of the Council's housing.

The Council has completed 131 new council homes so far with a further 164 to be completed in the coming year. This includes those homes that are significantly progressed on the Quad scheme on the Southern Fringe that will deliver a total of 104 homes and 39 new Council homes on the Homerton site.

Officers have identified sites to provide more social housing and have categorised new schemes opportunities in terms of land ownership as follows;

- a. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land with existing housing
- b. HRA garage and small in-fill sites
- c. General Fund sites
- d. Sites owned by other public sector bodies
- e. Sites in private ownership

As an indication of scale, sites have been identified that could deliver around 250 new social housing units for the Council over the next four years in addition to those already completed or approved.

This report provides details of three small additional sites identified by staff that could be incorporated into the already approved development of HRA garage and small in-fill sites. As each site can only accommodate one or two units, approval is requested to proceed on a programme basis rather than individually. Approval is therefore requested for an additional budget of £708,630 to deliver these three sites.

The proposed project includes those sites previously identified in the 3 Year Rolling Programme. None of the sites require the redevelopment of existing housing. All of the new social housing has been assessed as being for rent at Affordable Rents set at Local Housing Allowance levels.

Two of the additional sites have been separated from large garden plots of existing stock with the third site being vacant back land:

1. 1 Queensmeadow
2. 39 Hills Avenue
3. Wulfstan Way

Appendix 1 provides location plans for these 3 sites.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

The capital budget required for the garden land infill sites is £708,630

As schemes are subject to planning, the costs are indicative, however have been based on recently received budgets on other infill sites.

Based on these indicative viability assessments the budget for the sites is broken down as follows;

Site	Proposed House Type	Number	Indicative Budget
Queensmeadow	2 bed house	1	£184,860
Hills Avenue	2 bed house	1	£184,860
Wulfstan Way	2 bed house	2	£338,910
Total		4	£708,630

The indicative budgets provided above are fully inclusive of works costs and all associated professional fees.

The Housing Revenue Account Mid-Term Financial Review captures the funding available for the ongoing social housing programme. The budget for this scheme will utilise funding of £212,589 (30% of the total indicative scheme costs) from Right to Buy receipts, that must be expended to prevent them from being lost . The HRA budget allows and allocates match funding to the RTB receipts to facilitate this expenditure. This match funding is available through the capital receipts made from the sale of HRA properties during the previous year.

It is possible to bring forward these small sites for development, before previously identified schemes that are currently on hold, due to the relatively small financial resource required for delivery. These small sites also have

the benefit that they do not require any decanting of existing residents or purchase of leasehold properties that impact on the financial costs of the schemes and the timescales for delivery. It is hoped that by including these sites in a package of works with other small infill sites that savings can be made to deliver at costs less than those identified above.

As with all new build schemes as schemes are finalised they will only proceed if they can be funded within borrowing and capital funding parameters in the HRA 30 Business Plan.

(b) **Staffing Implications** (if not covered in Consultations Section)

The schemes will be managed by the Housing Development Agency following liaison with City Homes; the Estates and Facilities Service and the Legal Services Team.

There are no other significant staff implications.

(c) **Equality and Poverty Implications**

A series of EQIAs have been undertaken for the Council House Programme, the Housing Development Service and for individual schemes. The EQIAs mainly highlight the benefits of the Council retaining direct control of new housing development itself to ensure a focus on the delivery of housing that meets a diverse range of housing needs. Part of the assessment underlines the need for Affordable Housing to help those most likely to suffer poverty as well as ways in which new Affordable Housing will directly save money for tenants, such as energy saving measures.

(d) **Environmental Implications**

The social housing will be built to the equivalent of Level 4 of the Code for sustainable homes or other such sustainable specification as implemented by the City Council.

(e) **Procurement**

These sites will be tendered in a traditional manner to small/medium sized local contractors as part of a package approach to maximise value for money alongside those sites previously approved for development on the Garage and Infill Sites previously approved in March 2015.

The site at Wulfstan Way also provides an opportunity to purchase additional garden land to facilitate a larger development. As these gardens

are only accessible through CCC owned land the values would not attract high open market plot levels as they are only of use to CCC.

(f) Consultation and communication

This scheme does not involve the redevelopment of existing residential accommodation. Consultation will therefore follow the process required by the planning process.

Internal communication will be structured around the established groups that meet every Committee cycle and oversee the Council's social housing programme, namely; an officer group; a residents consultative group; and the Members Steering Group.

(g) Community Safety

There are no recognised implications on Community Safety with the proposed developments. At Wulfstan Way there is a benefit to undertaking the development on back land that has been the subject of anti-social behaviour in the past.

5. Background papers

None

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 provides location plans for all of the sites.

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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